K. Ramakrishna Rao · Anand C. Paranjpe

Psychology in the Indian Tradition

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Reviewers' Comments

Rao and Paranjpe are masters in illuminating the rich, complex, and sophisticated tradition of Indian psychology. In the present work, they do so in a way that enables us who live outside this culture not only to appreciate its history, its practices, and its significance in today's world, but as well to absorb its potentials. This is not only a careful and systematic synopsis of a complex array of concepts, values, and practices, it is also a compelling invitation to "try it on"—both conceptually and in our daily lives. The need for such understanding and appreciation of who we are as human beings has never been greater.

Kenneth J. Gergen, Professor of Psychology,
Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania, USA

This book offers a way out of the morass in which psychology in India, cut off from its native habitus, finds itself today. In mining the rich vein of psychological insight in the Indian tradition, especially Yoga and Advaita, it outlines a new paradigm for the discipline which is Indian in essence and universal in its reach and application. [It is] a major work that is certain to provoke much discussion among students of psychology, philosophy, and the social sciences.

Sudhir Kakar, Psychoanalyst, Writer,
and Honorary Professor of Psychology,
GITAM University, India

Are mind, body, and consciousness irreducible? Does mind have the potential to survive after death? In the western world these are preoccupations of philosophy and religion. Indian psychology does not make such distinctions. Professors Rao and Paranjpe take up the challenge of providing answers for these and other equally intriguing and challenging questions on the nature of mind, exploring the new frontiers of Indian psychology. It is indeed a remarkably laudable effort.

Malavika Kapur, Professor,
National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore

[This book] is far more than an indigenous South Asian psychology. It is a systematic and comprehensive explication of an ancient yet contemporary classical Indian theory of the implications of the very existence of consciousness and the close connection between mental states and the spiritual nature of human beings.

Richard Shweder, Harold Higgins Swift Distinguished
Service Professor, Department of Comparative Human Development,
University of Chicago, USA

This book … is an outstanding contribution to psychology and human sciences in more ways than one. … The work deserves the serious attention of all those who believe that humans are, and desire to be, more than their bodily selves.

Rama Charan Tripathi, Former Director,
G.B. Pant Social Science Institute, Allahabad,
and Former Professor and Head,
Department of Psychology, Allahabad University, India

This book is a serious advancement of basic ideas in new science of psychology that transcends the limited perspectives of Euro-American assumptions of the deep bases of the human psyche.

Jaan Valsiner, Niels Bohr Professor of Cultural Psychology,
Aalborg Universitet, Denmark

Preface

Although the history of Indian psychology goes back to millennia, its modern phase —or revival, if you will—began only recently. Of the many psychologists who had realized the painful neglect of the indigenous tradition, about 150 came together at a conference in Pondicherry in 2002 and unanimously proclaimed the Manifesto of Indian Psychology. It was a declaration of their conviction that psychological concepts and ideas inherent in Indian tradition have much to contribute to advance psychological knowledge in general and that their neglect by psychologists in India is responsible in a large measure to the current unsavory state of psychology in the country. They reiterated their resolve to reorient psychology along the lines shaped by India's intellectual and spiritual history and ethos. About a year later, a smaller group assembled in Visakhapatnam and worked out a plan to prepare a set of three volumes, a handbook, a textbook, and a sourcebook of Indian psychology.

The first to be published was the handbook. The *Handbook of Indian Psychology*, edited by K. Ramakrishna Rao, Anand C. Paranjpe, and Ajit Dalal, was published by Cambridge University Press, India, in 2008. Despite some serious attempts and significant support from the Indian Council of Philosophical Research when K.R. Rao was the Chairman, the project for developing the sourcebook has languished. This is so mainly because it has not been easy to find either psychologists who have deep knowledge of the classic works in Sanskrit, Pāli, and Ardhamāgadhi or classicists sufficiently aware of the perspectives and needs of psychology today. The plans to complete this work are still on, and we hope that the sourcebook project would soon be completed.

We took upon ourselves the responsibility of writing the basic text book. Due to our various other commitments, both of us could not focus on the textbook project; it dragged along for almost a decade. During this long period we thought and rethought about what should go into this volume and how it may be presented. The result is what we are presenting here. As the readers will note, it is not exactly a typical textbook. In some places, it may read like a monograph. We think, however, that it serves the main purpose it is expected to address, which is to provide a basic grounding in Indian psychological thought and its place in current psychological science.

One of the major trends relating to psychology in the world at large is that consciousness has become an active interdisciplinary field of study rather than being a topic within psychology. This change in approach is clearly reflected in the contents of the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, which attracts contributions from relatively few psychologists and a whole lot of philosophers, neuropsychologists, neurobiologists, and researchers from a variety of related disciplines. The concept of pure consciousness, which is at the core of psychology in the Indian tradition since the time of the Upaniṣads, has now found a place in discussions about the nature of consciousness by scientists and scholars belonging to diverse disciplines. Against the backdrop of current debates on the nature of consciousness, our discussion of this topic had to address neuropsychological and a host of other perspectives.

Another emerging trend of the past decade is the increasing popularity of meditation as a technique in the tool box of contemporary clinical psychologists. Needless to say, varied techniques of meditation, whether yogic or along the lines of Buddhist *vipaśyanā*, are primarily products of the rich spiritual traditions of India. Whether we are addressing our writing to our students or colleagues, it is essential that we convey to the readers the classical views on meditation, as well as the way it is being used in psychological study and research today.

A third emerging trend is positive psychology, which focuses on happiness, fulfillment, bliss, and various other desirable aspects of human experience as opposed to the strong focus on various forms of psychopathology that were the focus in earlier years. This trend is clearly consistent with one of the core aspects of psychology in the Indian tradition, and this had to get reflected in our writing.

Our overview of the recent research on meditation took us deeply into data and data analysis. Clearly, this is an area where a typically traditional Indian concept and technique has been subjected to wide ranging empirical scrutiny. The current zeitgeist of psychology in the world at large is clearly more data-driven than theory-loaded, and as such it is but natural that our readers would ask us to tell them more about facts than just concepts. Surely the main sources of Indian psychology have more concepts and theories than empirical data. But then the Indian emphasis has been more on practice than on gathering data. There has always been a connection between theories and practices even though this is often implicit rather than explicit. Traditional theories are not always pure speculations. They are often grounded in observations of human behavior. However, the observations made by Indian psychologists through millennia were not recorded or statistically analyzed in the popular contemporary format. As our survey of the burgeoning literature on meditation indicates, the Western demand for empirical evidence complements the Indian emphasis on practice. A related issue is the evidence of the relative effectiveness of traditional techniques, and this is reflected in our overview of the relevant literature.

The traditional focus on human development has been on self-realization and the major forms of yoga aim at total personal transformation in real life. This is different from the current interest in measuring the gradual changes in specific aspects of individuals brought about in the course of the therapeutic uses of traditional

techniques such as meditation. The Indian perspective is more holistic than molecularistic and piecemeal. As such, from the traditional Indian viewpoint, the proof of the pudding lies in the lives of people who successfully practiced various forms of yoga leading to the state of self-realization. Against this background, the life histories of sages and saints present crucial data about the effectiveness of some of the major forms of application of psychological knowledge in the Indian tradition.

The three case studies presented in Chap. 9 of this book constitute significant data about ideal forms of human behavior as conceived in the Indian tradition. Although such behavior emphasizes spirituality, it does not imply focus on some other-worldly gain; it clearly involves behaving in this world. The last chapter, which is on Mahatma Gandhi, attempts to demonstrate that spirituality as conceived in the Indian culture is not aimed at some other-worldly gain; rather it aims at positive changes in the individual as well as the society here and now. Indeed, the life history of M.K. Gandhi clearly shows that psychology in the Indian tradition is not only alive and well, it is capable of presenting to the world innovative ways of solving major problems in today's troubled world.

In concluding this preface, we express our gratitude to all those who directly or indirectly helped us in this enterprise. We learned much from the writings of several scholars who wrote on the subject of Indian psychology, from Jadunath Sinha to S. K. Ramachandra Rao. We are equally benefitted by our association with colleagues who share our interest in Indian psychology. These include Sudhir Kakar, Girishwar Misra, Matthijs Cornelissen, Ajit Dalal, and a host of others. Shinjini Chatterjee of Springer has been a source that kept us on track with her interest in the project. Also, we express our appreciation and thanks to Smt. V.K.V. Prasanna, who ungrudgingly typed various drafts of the manuscript.

Finally, if this modest attempt by us could stimulate interest in Indian psychology among psychologists in India as well as among those psychologists around the world who are looking for an alternate model to study human nature, we would feel well rewarded for the several years of intellectual labor that went into bringing out this book.

K. Ramakrishna Rao
Anand C. Paranjpe

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Chapter 1
Scope, Substance, and Methods of Study

Ātmānam viddhi, "know thy self," is the central tenet of Indian thought. It is also the cornerstone of Indian psychology from the Vedic times to the present. By knowing yourself, it is believed, you know everything that needs to be known, because the truth is within you. You are the truth. That is you, *tat-tvam-asi*. If search for understanding the self is the base of philosophical pursuit, study of the ways of self-realization is the subject matter of psychology. This is the classical wisdom. Indian psychology attempts to study the person in order to understand human potentials and their realization in life. It aims at authentic living in pursuit of happiness that is lasting and not momentary. Realization involves more than cognitive knowing. It goes beyond knowing truth to incorporating that knowledge into one's being and conduct. Consequently, psychology is not mere theoretical knowledge, but it includes its application to life and living. Indian psychology, as we study it, involves a systematic reconstruction of classical Indian thought and native psychological practices. The resulting body of psychological knowledge enables us to understand human nature and to apply that knowledge to fully realize human potentials. Indian psychology utilizes and incorporates concepts, categories, and models derived from thought native to the Indian subcontinent and practices that have been developed and preserved for centuries.

Psychology as it has grown in the West is built on a set of assumptions governing the Western thought since the pre-Socratic times. As Peters (1962) the historian of psychology observes, psychology is a product of over twenty-three centuries of Western thought. What is known as psychology today, writes Peters, is "just an amalgam of different questions about human beings which have grown out of a variety of traditions of inquiry" (p. 27). Western psychology, as Brett's (1921) *History of Psychology* also shows, is built on the inheritance of a long line of religio-philosophical and medical writers.

In India also there is an equally long line of thinkers who have had profound insights into human nature. Unfortunately, psychology that is most commonly taught and practised today in India incorporates little of this. Indeed, Indian tradition has had very little impact on psychology as it had grown in the West and was adopted uncritically in India during the colonial period and continues to have its sway in the Indian academia. Standard psychology textbooks make no mention of

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Indian psychology. Books on history of psychology also make no reference to it. Perhaps the exception is Brett's three-volume *History of Psychology*. In Vol. I, Chap. 18, a section refers to Indian psychology under the heading "Indian Writings." However, in the currently available abridged edition even this section is missing. Another exception is the revised edition of *Theories of Personality* by Hall and Lindzey (1978), which contains a section on Indian theories of personality. For all those who are familiar with the current state of affairs, it is clear that the rich psychological tradition prevalent in India for nearly 3000 years has had little influence on what is regarded as psychology now.

This scenario is especially disappointing to those of us in India with interest in psychology and some familiarity with Indian thought. This is so because psychology as taught and practised in Indian academia appears to lack appropriate relevance in the Indian context; and consequently it plays a minor role in national development. Imitating and merely replicating Western studies, psychologists in India have failed, with few exceptions, to creatively contribute to expansion of psychological knowledge. Finally, the fact that psychology in the Indian tradition is pregnant with alternate models that appear to satisfactorily address some of the challenges facing psychology today makes it equally frustrating to see that all that wisdom is lost to the inquiring minds. Those who have some exposure to native psychological wisdom cannot fail to note that indeed Indian psychology has the potential to bring about a paradigm shift in the way we look at human beings and how we may study them. We may find here the contours of a new and inclusive psychology that would help address issues that appear intractable from the current psychological paradigm.

1.1 What Is Psychology in the Indian Tradition?

In order to understand what Indian psychology is, it will be helpful to know first what it is not. Paradoxical as it may seem, Indian psychology is not what most psychologists in India teach or practice today. This is somewhat contrary to common sense perception that science is what scientists do. The two centuries of British rule not only had adverse effects on India's politico-economic conditions, but it also disturbed the educational scenario in significant ways. Colleges and universities were established with the explicit goal of teaching Western science and culture and for training Indians to help the British to rule India. This has had a lasting impact on the Indian psyche, unlike anything in the past.

It was not unusual for India to attract people from other parts of the world for economic and other kinds of exploitation. This was going on for thousands of years. However, what is different in the modern colonization is that, in addition to economic exploitation and political dominance, it resulted in influencing and disturbing the indigenous culture and the Indian mindset in ways entirely different from the previous. On previous occasions, the incoming influence was eventually absorbed by the native culture and became its indistinguishable part. The attention given to education by the British rule and deliberately modeling it after their own to serve their interests,

had a totally different result. Instead of a synthesis with the past, there was a cultural split and schism that has continued to characterize India's intellectual climate even after 67 plus years of her political independence. This may be called the colonial syndrome, which has its most debilitating academic influence on the development of social sciences in the country in general, and psychology in particular.

1.1.1 Indian Psychology and Psychology in India

Psychology in India as an academic discipline is not a recent phenomena. It has a long history, not too far behind the West. B.N. Seal is reported to have established a psychological laboratory in 1905. We may recall that the first such laboratory was established by Wilhelm Wundt in Leipzig, Germany in 1879. Thus, India was about a quarter of century behind the West in this respect. The first university department of psychology was established at the University of Calcutta 100 years ago in 1915. Now, one would think that while celebrating the centennial of this great event, we could boast of a thriving discipline of psychology as in the West. However, this hardly seems to be the case despite its proliferation as an academic discipline. Psychology in American colleges and universities is one of the most popular subjects on the campus in terms of enrolment, faculty strength, and research output. In India, psychology is very much undervalued. Though taught in several universities and many colleges, it plays a very minor role, if any, in national planning and development. Psychological services are not available in much of the country. Where they are available, they are little appreciated.

There are many reasons why this is so. The most important of them all is that psychology in India started as an alien discipline, and continues to be so. It is simply unable to connect with the national ethos. Psychology, unlike physics and chemistry, is culture bound. It is not entirely a positive and value-free science. It is a human science, normative and socially connected. Community and culture are no less its flesh and blood than any intrinsic laws implied in human behavior. Divorced from the native ethos and unconnected with community conditions, it becomes a lifeless skeleton. What we have in India is a psychology of sorts and not Indian psychology.

N.N. Sengupta who headed the first Department of Psychology at the University of Calcutta received his training under Hugo Münsterberg (1858–1916) at Harvard University. Since then and even after independence, many of the leading psychologists in Indian universities have been trained in the U.S. and the U.K. They brought with them Western concepts, methods, and even research topics. They subscribed by and large to a positivist philosophy of science and shared the dominant trend to model psychology after Newtonian physics. If psychology in general suffers from "physics envy," psychology in India struggles under "Western envy."

It has been observed often that much of psychological research that goes on in India with few exceptions is largely imitative and replicative of what goes on in the West. More than 25 years ago, a senior Indian psychologist Asthana (1988) lamented

with a sense of indignation that the "concerns of Western psychology of yester years are the current interests of the Indian psychologists" (pp. 155–156). A decade later, the same situation was noted by Kao and Sinha (1997). They observed that psychological researches in this part of the world were "largely imitative and replicative of foreign studies. Psychologists in these countries became recipients rather than exchange agents of knowledge" (p. 10). More recently Misra (2011) observed that psychology in India remains an extension of the Euro-American tradition and continues with Western concepts and methods. However, he noticed some change in the attitudes and activities of a significant number of psychologists in India in recent years indicating "a struggle towards a paradigm shift which is occurring." Misra goes on to observe that it will be "interesting to see what a genuine paradigm shift will look like in the decades to come" (p. 13).

There is thus a well-meant optimism and a ray of hope that the distinction between "Indian psychology" and "psychology *in* India" would soon disappear in the emerging paradigm to which Misra is referring. His *Handbook of Psychology in India* (Misra 2011) is designed to be a "step-by-step guide to the new directions charted by Indian psychology in recent times. It documents the paradigm shifts, developments, and transformations in the discipline, and features scholarship that recognizes contributions from indigenous knowledge systems as well as contemporary developments in major fields" (from the blurb on the jacket). All this is well taken and true; but what does not seem to be the case is that the bulk of what is going in India today as psychological research is not quite the same as represented in Misra's volume. If we browse the psychological journals coming out of India, including the journal *Psychological Studies* edited by Misra himself and, go through the various papers presented at the annual conferences of the National Academy of Psychology and the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology and so on, we find that an overwhelming majority of them continue along the old paradigm with little notice of the emerging new paradigm. Therefore, it is not far from the truth to say that Indian psychology and psychology in India continue at the present time to carry different connotations.

1.1.2 Indian Psychology and Indigenous Psychology

Sometimes Indian psychology is equated with indigenous psychology. The writings of Durganand Sinha (1965, 1998), for example, suggest this. Janak Pandey (2001) also appears to ignore the subtle distinction between Indian psychology and indigenous psychology. Girishwar Misra (Misra and Mohanty 2002; Misra 2011), himself a leading advocate of Indian psychology, appears to be not entirely free from this equivocation either.

Indigenous psychology in one sense is broader than Indian psychology in that each culturally distinct country has its own culturally relevant approach to psychology. The emphasis is on relating psychological study, research, and application to the native sociocultural context and to develop "indigenous concepts, methods, theories and cross-cultural research" (Pandey 2001, p. 9). In another sense,

indigenous psychology is narrower in scope than Indian psychology and may be subsumed under the general rubric of cross-cultural psychology. A more important difference between Indian psychology and indigenous psychology is that the latter is presumed to be theory neutral and that it may be pursued from different theoretical perspectives such as psychoanalysis, behaviorism, or cognitive psychology. Indian psychology, however, is theory-loaded. It subscribes to a certain conception of human nature; it has its own metatheoretical base and involves a set of broader methods to study and transform human behavior.

The distinctive feature of Indian psychology is that its central tenets are rooted in native Indian practices and are derived from classical Indian thought. Indian psychology for Indians is obviously indigenous; but it is more. First, its relevance is pan-human and goes well beyond the geographical boundaries of India. It has its origins in India, but its relevance is global, like psychoanalysis, for example, which has its origins in Europe but is practised around the world. Second, it involves fruitful model(s) to systematically study human nature. Indian psychology is, therefore, a distinct psychological tradition with its own perspective that has significant ramifications for psychological theory, research, and practice in India and beyond. In this sense, Indian psychology is a system/school of psychology like psychoanalysis or behaviorism, whereas indigenous psychology has no such theoretical foundation of its own. However, in the Indian context, the two can be complementary. That is possibly the reason for the equivocation.

1.1.3 A Model of Indian Psychology

Indian psychology, then, is a system of psychology that is rooted in classical Indian thought and is implied in numerous techniques prevalent in the subcontinent for psycho-spiritual development such as the various forms of yoga. In fact, Indian thought is so rich, complex, and varied that a variety of interpretations and several models are possible. However, we think the following generalized model is an appropriate one to begin with. At any rate, it is the one we attempt to develop and incorporate in this volume.

Indian psychology involves the study of the person. The person is conceived as a composite of body, mind, and consciousness. Body refers to the nervous system, the senses, and associated structures connected with the brain. The mind is the hypothetical cognitive instrument related to the body at one end and consciousness at the other. Consciousness is conceived to be irreducibly distinct from body and mind. It constitutes the nonphysical aspect of the person. Body, mind, and consciousness are not only conceptually distinct, but are also mutually irreducible in the human context. Consciousness is qualitatively different from the body and the mind with which it may be associated. For this reason, though it is associated with a mind at a given time, it does not interact with it. The body and the mind, unlike consciousness, are physical; and they can interact with each other and are influenced by each other. However, a mind cannot be reduced into its physical

constituents and a body cannot be transformed into a mind even though they influence each other within a person. They function differently. From this perspective, the body is conceived as gross matter that permits disintegration. However, mind being a subtle form of matter is not constrained by spatiotemporal variables in the same manner as the gross body does. The body disintegrates irretrievably at death. The mind, however, has the potential to survive bodily death (Rao 2014b).

As a composite of body, mind, and consciousness, the person functions at three different levels. Applied to knowing, for example, the person is capable of processing information sensorially through the instrumentalities of the body. This may be called the level of *observation*. The second level of *understanding* is facilitated by the functioning of the mind. The third level is transcognitive *realization* of truth. While realizing truth, the mind participates in consciousness as-such, relatively, if not absolutely, free from bodily processes and their influence. The concepts of *śravaṇa* (literally hearing, but can be equated with *observation* in general), *manana* (thinking/understanding), and *nididhyāsana* (meditative realization) roughly correspond to the three levels of knowing. At the level of *śravaṇa* and *manana*, observations and understanding, there is a basic distinction between subject and object and thought and action. Knowing and being are dissociated. One may know that something is untrue, but still may act on it and vice versa. However, in meditative realization, a state achieved by *nididhyāsana,* the distinction between subject and object disappears; and there is fusion of thought and action; and knowing and being blend into each other so that one becomes/does what he knows to be true. This is exemplified in the Upaniṣadic statement "to know Brahman is to be Brahman."

Mind is the instrument of cognition and manifests awareness in various forms because of its association with consciousness. It is also the seat of emotions and volition. In its interaction with the body, the mind experiences all kinds of emotions and engages in different kinds of action. Thus the mind is the instrument of our cognitions, affections, and volitions. In recognition of this fact, the person, referred to as *jīva* in Sanskrit, is commonly conceived as a knower (*jñātā*), enjoyer/sufferer (*bhoktā*), and agent (*kartā*). While thinking, feeling, and doing are normal modes in day-to-day living, they are biased or distorted by a variety of factors and, therefore, they do not truly reflect the real state of affairs. Various ways of overcoming the limitations of these modes have been developed. Successful practice of such ways leads a person to realize her true *self* (*ātman*) through the experience of consciousness as-such and to have undistorted truth, unblemished bliss, and uncorrupted volition. A person who thus attains self-realization reaches the most abstract and sublime form and realizes consciousness as-such, which is referred to as *Brahman* in the Upaniṣads, *puruṣa* in Sāṁkhya system of Indian philosophy. In mundane activities it is the ego that enjoys and desires. Knowing becomes subservient to satisfying the physical appetites and bodily generated psychological longings. The person has changing images of the self. However, *Brahman* or *Ātman* is something that pervades the person as well as the universe at large. In virtue of this, there manifests unity in the diversity we find in the universe and continuity in

the changing spectrum of events in one's life. The unity of the person, despite her constantly changing mental states and bodily conditions, is a function of the presence/reflection of *Ātman* (consciousness as-such).

Here a distinction needs to be made between consciousnesses as-such identified as *Brahman*, *ātman*, or *puruṣa,* and awareness. Consciousness as-such is unchanging and ineffable. It is indeterminate and unqualified, and as such it takes no forms. In a significant sense it is not localizable. In the context of cognitive activity, its role is no more than to reflect/illumine the form the mind takes in its interaction with the world through the sensory gateways. Awareness is the result of consciousness illuminating the forms the mind takes. Therefore, consciousness is involved in one's cognition, affections, and volitions to the extent that the person's states of mind are illumined by the reflection of consciousness. The person whose mind acts through the bodily apparatus may be considered conditioned because her thought, passion, and action are biased and distorted by the conditions of the body. Only an unconditioned person can have the true reflections of consciousness as-such. The goal of the person is to reach such an unconditioned state (Rao 2010).

Again, as a composite of body, mind, and consciousness, the person may be studied from a physiological perspective to learn how bodily processes influence one's behavior and being, and how mental states affect bodily processes. A person can also be studied from the perspective of the mind to learn how the mind functions and how its functions are influenced and how they may be controlled to enhance human potentials and promote wellness. Further, human functioning can be studied from the perspective of consciousness to understand and realize non-physical resources of human functioning available because of the association of the mind with consciousness. Thus a person can be studied at different levels. Two such levels of utmost interest in psychology are the psychophysical level and the psycho-spiritual level. The latter is the level where the mind participates in consciousness as-such and the person has self-realization.

The attention to the "inward" in Indian thought has led to an emphasis on consciousness and its primacy. The primacy is asserted either as an overarching single reality as in Advaita monism or as an irreducible aspect of reality independent of the physical as in Sāṁkhya-Yoga. In either case, the assumption is not engendered by rational argument alone based on metaphysical presumptions or the authority of the Vedas. They are derived from their respective epistemological positions, which are themselves grounded in psychological assumptions and are considered phenomenologically given facts.

In its quest for truth, the Indian tradition turning inward attempts to identify the elements that tend to distort and falsify our general understanding of the world around us. It seeks to explore methods and strategies to control them. Further, it endeavors to develop techniques that reveal truth in its pristine and unsullied condition, to formulate philosophical theories, and to prescribe practices of conduct consistent with the truth so revealed. In such a scheme, the first step is to understand how we normally acquire information and the possible limitations and imperfections of such information. The beginning point then is cognitive science as systematic epistemology.

Now, the predominant mode of acquiring information is sensory processing. Such processing is known to be biased because of the limitations inherent in the processing instruments and also because of the manner in which the processing person is situated, whose presuppositions, attitudes, and motivations constrain and bias her perceptions. The processing mechanisms themselves determine to some degree the form, the nature, and the content of cognitions. The way bats perceive the world is different from the way we do. Humans cannot process low auditory signals as a dog or deer can. If we were situated differently with different kinds of sensory-motor apparatuses we would likely function differently and our knowledge of the world would be different in significant ways.

What then is the "true" world? Answers vary depending on what one's focus is. If the focus is outward, one's perception of the world consists in the way it is represented to us. The representations are believed to be true inasmuch as they are seen to correspond to the external objects and events, a correspondence attested by inter-subject agreement/validation. Although the outward reality is known only via the representations we have of it, in Kant's terms, the things-in-themselves remain forever unknown. Our knowledge of the world is true and valid to the extent we have consensual agreement on it. If the focus is inward, however, one tends to view true reality as no other than awareness itself. Some philosophers in the West who subscribe to this view assert that our perceptions constitute reality.

In the Indian tradition, even when reality is equated with awareness, awareness is not limited to representational perception. Rather, awareness is regarded as consisting of direct and unmediated awareness of reality. Such nonrepresentational awareness in a significant sense is reality itself. Humans, it is assumed, have the ability to realize reality in itself in the form of consciousness *as-such*. There is then the possibility of nonsensory source of knowledge, which by its very nature is believed to be free from the distortions and imperfections that beset sensorially processed information. Indeed, this is a view shared by many Indian thinkers, independent of their metaphysical presuppositions. It is believed that by following specified procedures and cultivating certain habits of mind, it is possible to attain a state of awareness that is reality itself. Such an understanding underscores much of Hindu and Buddhistic thought. Jainism places even a more specific emphasis on extrasensory sources of awareness.

The ultimate goal of human development is liberation or *mokṣa*, freedom from existential constraints. The sensory bondage of the mind is believed to be the most significant single source that screens true reality from us. Therefore, the liberation of the mind from that bondage is an essential condition for true freedom and *mokṣa*. For the one who realizes reality in its true form, the sensory knowledge we have of the world appears as nothing but an illusion, as a dream appears on waking. Freedom from such an illusion is a necessary condition for realizing the truth in one's being. The goal is to achieve perfect knowledge, because perfect knowledge makes one perfect. Perfect knowing in the final analysis involves realization of one's own being, self-realization. The strength of such an assertion is not derived merely from rational argument. Rather, it is grounded in the belief that it is possible to find such persons in real life. Realizing consciousness as-such is considered an

empirical fact experienced subjectively as well as shared by those who undergo necessary training and practice (*sādhanā*), following the prescribed discipline. Yoga is considered almost universally by all Indian thinkers to be a useful technique for emancipating the mind from its existential condition of sensory bondage so that it can access consciousness as-such for realization of the absolute truth.

1.1.4 Metatheoretical Base

Indian thought is not monolithic. There is tremendous diversity, and pluralism implicit in the Hindu ethos. In fact, it appears to be a salient feature of Indian culture because other systems like Buddhism also manifest diverse shades of thought from realism to nihilism. However, underlying this diversity, there is some kind of unifying thread that runs across these different systems binding them together in significant ways. That is what gives Indian thought its identity. This is especially true of psychological ideas. There is an abiding foundational base that underscores them. From this abiding base one could possibly build a variety of psychological models and theories. The organization of this volume is based on one such model described above. The following is a metatheoretical framework of the model.

Humans are situated in a sea of suffering. The goal is to swim to the shores of bliss, weathering the turbulence that surrounds them. The mind is the force behind the turbulence. The mind is on the one hand the main *source* of suffering, on the other hand it is also the *resource* to calm the turbulence and safely take the person to the shores. Suffering arises from the state of turbulence that surrounds the human condition. Bliss consists in calming the turbulence. It involves overcoming ignorance and realizing truth. Consciousness as-such (*cit*) constitutes the ultimate truth (*sat*). It is also a state of absolute bliss (*ānanda*). Form a psychological perspective, then, one could say that all the three aspects of human nature—thought, passion, and action—are rolled into one. For this reason, *Brahman* is conceived as *sat, cit*, and *ānanda.*

The mind thus plays a crucial role. Psychology is an important discipline to understand the role of the mind and to learn ways to control and use it as a resource for meeting successfully the existential challenges one faces. In the existential context, the mind is not a blank tablet, *tabula rasa*. It is imprinted with all kinds of attitudes and dispositions, inherited and acquired. The general term for that which underpins the internal influences on the mind is *karma*. The mind is also the storehouse of one's past experiences and memories. Further, the mind is characterized by frequent attentional shifts and consequent drifting and unsteadiness. This is an important problem and a challenge that needs to be addressed in one's quest for truth and bliss.

Consciousness as-such is both truth and reality. It is not readily accessible to the mind because the mind which is believed to reflect consciousness is tainted and biased in numerous ways, which color, cloud, and conceal consciousness as-such.

So, what one has in his cognitions is tainted consciousness and consequently a distorted picture of reality. This is believed to be the base of our primordial ignorance (*avidyā*) and the source of suffering.

In addition to the inability of the mind to truly reflect consciousness as-such because of the above factors, there is another dimension to the existential predicament of ignorance. The mind is connected to the body, and functions through it. This implies that the body places its own constraints on what the mind can in fact achieve in the human condition. For example, the mind attempts to access reality and influence it by utilizing the sensory-motor resources of the body. Consequently, reality revealed to us is colored by and crafted with sensory tools and images. In other words, the reality as molded by the mind is sensory in its tenor and texture. If our senses were to be different, as we observed earlier, the reality would look different and feel different. This would mean that our perception of reality is constructed; it is neither perfect nor entirely truthful as given. Therefore, there is no finality to what is known this way. Empirical knowledge needs to be taken as tentative and not infallible.

Another result of the mind–body nexus is the emergence of the ego. The ego arises as an organizing principle/entity that gives meaning and identity to the continuing play of images in the theater of the mind. Since the body has its needs for survival and procreation, they are exploited by the ego. The essential attribute of the ego is attachment, which involves longing and clinging.

Attachment engenders desires, and desires become self-multiplying, resulting in an unending circle. Satisfying desires becomes an end in itself. The person caught in this vicious circle of an ever-widening net of desires loses the sight of the main objective of realizing truth, and becomes preoccupied instead with mundane matters. She tends to identify the ego with the true *self* and to regard the sensory images of tainted reality as the reality itself. It is this primordial ignorance in which humans are seen as situated. The goal then becomes one of breaking through this vicious circle to place oneself on the firm path of finding truth and realize her identity in true *self*. This can be achieved via controlling and ultimately transcending the ego.

In the existential situation humans create a picture of reality of their own, tend to mistake that picture as accurate and complete account of reality, and consequently function in ways that bring about suffering of all kinds. The goal of finding truth and partaking in it eludes the person. The main current in classical Indian thought subscribes to the view that this situation can be changed and that humans have the ability and resources to bring about the necessary transformation to realize absolute truth in their being. When this happens, humans find themselves in a situation characterized by the experience of absolute and ultimate bliss (*ānanda*) one seeks, where one knows truth (*satyam*), does good (*śivam*), and enjoys beauty (*sundaram*) in its ultimate splendor.

Ignorance is not merely lack of correct knowledge; it is distorted perception of truth, and is the root cause of human suffering. It is the limiting condition that prevents us from realizing the true potential inherent within us. Ignorance as false knowledge is self-perpetuating unless checked; it masks truth. The ego is thus the main perpetrator of suffering. Consequently, it is in the taming of the ego,

deconstructing and ultimately eliminating it we find the key to unlock the doors for self-realization, to know truth and experience bliss.

There are three ways to accomplish this. They are the paths of knowledge (*jñāna mārga*), devotion/faith (*bhakti mārga*), and work (*karma mārga*). We will discuss them and their implication to psychology in subsequent chapters.

The metatheoretical base of Indian psychology thus consists of the following assumptions. First, the reality we experience, the so-called empirical reality, is not reality as-such. The empirical knowledge we have of the world is not the ultimate truth. Our cognitive structure is intrinsically incapable of giving such truth. Second, there are methods, other than the brain processes, that give us access to reality as-such. Empirical knowledge is derived from accessing the physical emanations emitted by the objects of knowledge by the sensory processes. In addition to empirical knowledge (*aparā vidyā*), there is transcendental knowledge (*parā vidyā*) that arises from accessing consciousness as-such. We explain and discuss these concepts in some detail in the next chapter. *Parā vidyā* enables us to know things-in-themselves. What our sensory processes reveal are sensory images of reality but not reality itself. It is transactional reality (*vyāvahārika sattā*) as distinguished from the transcendental reality (*pāramārthika sattā*).

The above metatheoretical postulates are explicitly stated in Vedānta, especially Advaita. Their applications are elaborated in some detail in Yoga. Consequently, Yoga and Advaita may be considered the foundation base of Indian psychology. For this reason, while the metaphysics of Advaita and epistemology of Yoga may be questioned, the practices and applications of yoga pervade across most Indian thought systems, whether Hindu, Buddhist, or Jaina.

1.1.5 Scope and Subject Matter

Indian psychology may be defined as a study of the person. In the theater of the person, the primary actors are the body, mind, and consciousness. There are two scenes in each act played. One is the *transactional* scene, which is the personal world of *saṁsāra* where the main players are body and mind. The other scene is the *transcendental* in which the principal players are mind and consciousness. Thus, life's play is seldom a soliloquy; and we will not understand the person from any single perspective either of the body, mind, or consciousness. As suggested by S.K. Ramachandra Rao, *vyāvahārika* implies the stage where knowing depends on the *jiva's* interaction (which is the literal meaning of the word *vyavahāra)* with the world through senses, reason, and mind, whereas at the transcendental level such interaction is set aside and overcome. Ramachandra Rao makes this clear in his book on Śaṅkara's Adhyāsa Bhāṣya. Therefore, Indian psychology studies the mind–body complex and the psycho-physical processes that influence behavior as well as the nexus between mind and consciousness that gives human nature its distinctiveness. It is the latter that adds the transpersonal dimension to Indian psychology. This may appear paradoxical at first glance in light of our definition

that Indian psychology is the study of the person. It is not so, however, because consciousness as-such in which humans participate is intrinsically transpersonal. In fact, a salient feature of Indian psychology is that we find in it a consummate synthesis of such dichotomy as personal and transpersonal, natural and supernatural, and science and spirituality, among others. In virtue of her interface with consciousness the person, engaged as she is in transactional endeavors, is able to participate in the transcendental realm as well. It is this fact that renders Indian psychology more inclusive than other schools and systems of psychology in the West.

The inclusiveness of Indian psychology may be illustrated by the extended connotation of two crucial but related concepts—"consciousness" and "self." Consciousness in one sense is awareness involved in the subjective knowledge we have of the world. This is the usual sense of consciousness. Then, *Brahman* is conceived as the abiding principle of consciousness. *Brahman* is abstract, absolute, and all-encompassing. Ordinary usage of consciousness does not warrant such an implication. Therefore, when we use consciousness in this sense we may capitalize "Consciousness." In Indian psychology, consciousness is used to refer to consciousness as-such, meaning contentless consciousness. Therefore, when we refer to consciousness as-such, we may italicize *consciousness.*

An analogous situation obtains in the case of "self." The Oxford English dictionary defines self as "a person's essential being," that which gives identity to the person, her personality. In the Indian thought *jīva* approximates to this definition. We may retain this meaning of self. However, *ātman* also means *self* in the sense of pure principle of sentience, consciousness as-such, or pure consciousness. In this sense, *ātman* is just consciousness and no agentic function is attributed to it. *Jīvasākṣin* in AdvaitaVedānta and *puruṣa* in Sāṁkhya-Yoga system approximate to this use. We may italicize *self* in this sense. Then, there is Brahman in the sense of Supreme Self. To convey this sense we may capitalize the Self. Thus, we have three distinct connotations of consciousness and self. There is also another sense where the self means both the pure principle of sentience and also the agent of experience. In this sense we use self in quotes, "self". When the context calls for clarification, we use Self, *self*, self, or "self" to refer to the above senses. When no such distinction is called for or when consciousness is qualified as pure consciousness or transcendental consciousness or empirical consciousness we use, however, self to imply any of the four senses. In such cases, the context will make the sense clear.

Indian psychology is also holistic as it is inclusive. The person is multidimensional, and yet she is unique and unified. Being holistic and open to different possibilities, Indian psychology does not dogmatically close its doors to phenomena that may appear anomalous on surface. Therefore, the so-called "hard" problems of consciousness or extraordinary phenomena, which appear to defy natural laws, are not anathema to ignore and avoid but welcome challenges to address. Thus Indian psychology tends to be more inclusive and less restrictive than other systems of psychology.

Indian psychology opens up possibilities for personal transformation and for enhancing human potentialities. In doing so, it provides useful models and

workable alternatives to restrictive, reductionist models. With emphasis on the subjective and the personal, Indian psychology accords appropriate place for the study of cognition, conation, and emotion, the "trilogy of the mind" for a wholesome understanding of the person. We find in it a reasonable basis for understanding the uniqueness of the individual and her identity from a holistic perspective and at the same show how individual identities do not become exclusive categories but aspects of more inclusive and salient identities.

Neurophysiological studies are not irrelevant to Indian psychology because the mind is connected to and is influenced by the brain. Yet, such studies are not an end in themselves because from the psychologist's perspective they are not the exclusive determinants of human behavior. Our motives, attitudes and aptitudes, desires, wishes and longings, which are also sources of behavior, have roots beyond physiological factors. In addition to the psycho-physical side, humans have a psycho-spiritual side. Human functioning is a product of the two and not an exclusive outcome of one or the other. This again is a significant departure from current mainstream psychology.

Consciousness is the distinguishing feature of the human condition. It is not a quality or attribute of a physical system. The processes in the brain do not generate consciousness. At best they help reflect consciousness. Therefore, consciousness may not be understood in any significant way by analysis of its neurological correlates, if such exist. The physical processes in the brain may help, however, to understand how consciousness as-such is shrouded and veiled from being witnessed in its true form. Further, the fact that the mind is connected to the brain and that the latter helps to cognitively process the world outside through its sensory system is highly relevant with significant implications to cognitive science. In addition, control of these processes may be necessary to access consciousness as-such.

It may be of some interest to note that Indian psychology does not begin with theory and then derive applications from it. Rather the emphasis is on practice, and indeed theory takes a backseat. This is sometimes seen as a weakness by Western scholars. For example, the German philosopher Husserl (1965) had disparagingly characterized Indian and Chinese traditions as setting practical goals with utter neglect of theory development, unlike his own tradition that revelled in speculative theorizing. Husserl is of course wrong in thinking that the Indian tradition has neglected theory as anyone familiar with its rich philosophical heritage knows. However, the attention given to practical aspects in psychology, though it has overshadowed the theoretical contributions, has some salutary effects. It has accumulated over centuries many practices that can be seen as technologies for psycho-spiritual development.

Technologies for human development, like those utilized in the practice of yoga and meditation, constitute a salient segment of Indian psychology. It is suggested that cognitive excellence and personal transformation can be achieved by such practices. Therefore, research in meditation and the variety of yoga practices available in Indian tradition is an important area of Indian psychology. This is so because they give us the understanding and the ways of helping the person toward reaching the goal of self-realization. On the path of self-realization, the person goes

through the process of deconditioning that frees her progressively from ego compulsions and other existential constraints, which in turn contribute to the unfolding of hidden human potentials. There is suggestive evidence that meditation helps psychosomatic well-being by reducing anxiety and stress, and that it opens up doors of perception, and enables one to have extraordinary experiences.

Deconditioning of the person is not the same as depersonalization. Deconditioning makes the person free by making him less biased. The unconditioned person would be in full control of her functioning unencumbered by presuppositions, prejudices, and other biasing factors. In Indian psychology the concept of an unconditioned and ego-free person is not considered simply a construct but is claimed to be a phenomenological fact.

The psychological health of a person depends more on freedom from ego-compulsions rather than the so-called ego-strength. As one becomes progressively free from the shackles brought about by ego-involvement, the person experiences different states of consciousness. Indian psychology is rich in descriptive phenomenology of consciousness, which could be very useful not only for psychodiagnostic purposes but could also help in the psychotherapeutic practice.

Meditation as a deconditioning process is also a technique for effective learning. It has been pointed out that meditation gives one control over inhibitory systems, stability, and one-pointed concentration, which in turn help and facilitate learning and problem-solving (Kulkarni 1978).

Prolonged practice of concentration enables the practicing person to understand how the mind functions and also helps her to gain control over its functions. There is reason to believe that control and suppression of normal cognitive functions lead to special states of consciousness that manifest extraordinary phenomena and open up new potentialities with significant implications for a person's knowing and being. In the Indian tradition, three levels of excellence are recognized. One is transactional excellence resulting in enhanced efficiency in learning and problem-solving. The second level of excellence relates to access to new ways of knowing. Intuitive understanding and paranormal awareness are examples. At the third level of development, we find a total transformation of the person brought about by the fusion of thought and action in one's being. Such a transformation transports the person from the transactional, empirical realm to the transcendental plane. This conception of transformation bridges the gap between *saṁsāra* (the secular) and the spiritual domains. In the Indian tradition, there is no absolute divide between *saṁsāra* and spirituality. The human journey is from the ordinary to the exceptional, from transactional excellence in observation and thinking to transcendental experience of pure conscious states. The methodological implication of this view is that, for a complete understanding of human nature, current reductionist models are clearly inappropriate. The bottom-up approach needs to be supplemented with top-down methodology because extraordinary phenomena may not be adequately understood in terms of the ordinary. In order to fully understand human nature, we need methods to reliably learn about internal states, methods for validly utilizing subjective experience to meaningfully explore uniquely human aspects of

our being. Traditional Indian practices provide helpful tools to develop interesting methods in this direction.

It is obvious that the above theoretical and applied aspects of Indian psychology are in sharp contrast with the Western paradigm governing the mainstream psychology today. In the current psychological thinking there is no provision for consciousness as-such. Consciousness is considered as something related to or about an object or event. Any claim of experiencing a state of contentless consciousness without any discernable content is prima facie a suspect. Intentionality is taken as the defining characteristic of consciousness. From the Western perspective, adjustment of the ego and not its elimination is the goal. Truth is what is given in sensory experience, and not something hidden from it. Pleasure and pain, happiness and suffering are sense related and there is no bliss beyond sensory enjoyment. Knowledge is entirely sense-mediated and cognitively derived.

From the Indian perspective, ignorance of our true nature is the source of suffering and self-realization is therefore a means of salvation. In the Western scientific tradition, it is different. Self itself is a social or cognitive construct and holds no secrets to one's true nature. These differences have important implications to the psychological study of a person as well as for the application of psychological knowledge to improve human condition. Indian psychology aims at elevating humans to a higher level of being, well beyond the Western "repair and rebuild" model. It is positive, inclusive, and holistic. It suggests ways of unfolding hidden human potential.

1.2 Sources of Indian Psychology

The original sources of Indian psychology are the classical texts beginning with the Vedas and the variety of psycho-spiritual practices prevalent in the Indian subcontinent since antiquity. Some of these practices could be pre-Vedic. Yogic motifs in a number of seals of the Indus Valley civilization were found at the historic sites of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, which possibly date back to pre-Vedic times, a few millennia before Christ (Singh and Mukesh 2010). Significant speculations on the nature of mind, consciousness, and their role in human behavior and conduct were made from the time of the Vedas and Upaniṣads to Sri Aurobindo.

We find in the *Ṛg Veda*, for example, a distinction made between two aspects of the mind—*manas* and *citta*. *Manas* is the processor and *citta* is the depository of a variety of mental phenomena like thoughts and feelings. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* likens the human quest to the chariot. "The *Ātman* is the rider of the chariot, *buddhi* is the charioteer, *manas* is the reins and the senses are the horses drawing the chariot" (3.3). The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* points to the central role of the mind in our quest for liberation. The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* depicts the person as encased in five sheaths (*kośas*). The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* explains the different states of consciousness like wakefulness, dream, and deep sleep, as well as the extraordinary

state simply called the Fourth State (*turiyā avasthā*) characterized by pure, contentless consciousness.

We find development of psychological ideas in different systems (*darśana*s) of Indian philosophy. The most prominent among them is Yoga, as we noted. In fact, many of the basic concepts behind yoga practices are accepted by the other systems giving one the impression that Yoga psychology is Indian psychology. Yoga is clearly the foundational source of Indian psychology. However, each of the major systems like Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Vedānta made significant contributions of their own for understanding human nature. Also, nonorthodox systems like Buddhism and Jainism contain many significant psychological ideas.

Buddhistic psychology is essentially an attempt to understand the nature of transcendence (*nirvāṇa*) and the methods of attaining it. In Buddhism we find that normal consciousness and the psychological processes associated with it are so organized that they generate a sense of stable and enduring ego, which in turn influences, colors, and even determines our passions, thoughts, and actions. This is seen, however, as the cause of manifest suffering. The person in pursuit of salvation needs to transcend the ego by achieving a transpersonal state where the psychological processes lose their ego-reference. Buddhism believes not only in the existence of such a transpersonal, egoless state but also in the possibility of attaining it by following certain practices. By describing the different stages involved in the progress from the normal to the transcendental, transpersonal states, Buddhism provides us with an interesting and detailed phenomenology of consciousness (Rao 1988).

Yoga is a determined pursuit to transcend the inherent limitations of phenomenal awareness to achieve higher states of consciousness in which awareness is progressively delinked from sensory processing and gets closer to "true" knowledge. Patañjali at the very outset states in his *Yoga Sūtras* that the practice of yoga is to control the *vṛtti*s (fluctuating forms) of the mind, which in many ways disturb its proper functioning. When a state of transcendence is reached and awareness is successfully delinked and dissociated from sensory mode in a state of *samādhi* the mind gets fully absorbed in the object of consciousness. Transcendence signifies a state of pure consciousness; it involves experiencing consciousness *as-such*. Knowledge obtained in such a state is considered perfect and beyond falsification and doubt. It is indubitable and authentic by self-certification. The practice of Yoga is thus believed to lead to a state of *niruddha*, complete control and transcendence of sense processes, which enables one to achieve a state of unconditioned freedom in thought and perfection in being (*kaivalya*).

While agreeing with Yoga on its theory of cognition, AdvaitaVedānta asserts that sensory knowledge is relatively true but not absolutely so. Absolute knowledge is possible only when one transcends the sensory involvement and accesses consciousness as-such in a state of transcendence. At the transcendental level of pure consciousness, knowledge is free of sense-mediated content. It is *svarūpa jñāna* as distinguished from *vṛtti jñāna* which is dependent on mental processes and past experiences. *Vṛtti jñāna* is mediated, representational, and relative. At the level of pure consciousness, knowledge is direct and immediate. It is intuitive apprehension

of reality. Here, being and knowing become one. According to Advaita, the goal of human endeavor is one of gaining absolute freedom from the limiting conditions of empirical existence. Perfect knowledge is achieved by realizing states of pure consciousness. Yoga is the recommended means. It is possible to achieve states of transcendence in an embodied condition. Śaṅkara among others subscribed to the concept of *jīvanmukti*, the notion that the mind can be freed from its existential sensory bondage while being in the embodied state. *Jīvanmukta* is the one who has gained freedom from the constraints of the sense-bound mind and realized pure consciousness in her being.

The relevance of classical Indian thought to psychology, as briefly described above, is recognized from almost the time when psychology was born as a separate discipline during the late nineteenth century. Radhakrishnan in his *History of Indian Philosophy* has not failed to notice this. One of the earliest scholars who had seen the relevance of Indian thought to psychology was Caroline Rhys Davids. Her books include *The Birth of Indian Psychology and Its Development in Buddhism* (1936) and *Buddhist Psychology: An Inquiry into the Analysis and Theory of Mind in Pali Literature* (1924). Another early book of interest is Akhilananda's (1946) *Hindu Psychology: Its Meaning for the West*, which led to some interest in Indian psychology among Western scholars. This was followed by his *Mental Health and Hindu Psychology* (Akhilananda 1952).

The most significant effort to provide a comprehensive survey of Indian psychology is Jadunath Sinha's (1933/1958) three volumes on Indian Psychology. The first volume, the most important of the three, contains an extended coverage of cognition and includes discussion of perception, dreams, abnormal perceptions, illusions, supernormal perceptions, memory, imagination, language, and thinking. The second volume contains extensive discussions on consciousness, feelings, emotions, and the psychology of aesthetics, sex, and religion. The discussion on each topic has a great deal of depth, and the serious student will find necessary references to original sources.

The main difficulty with these volumes, however, is that so much material is juxtaposed without meaningful organization in terms of modern psychology. The reader would be hard-pressed to grasp the contents for what they are worth if she does not have the necessary background orientation in Indian philosophy. Also lacking are critical assessment and leads toward developing hypotheses for testing. A student of psychology today is unlikely to find much in them to motivate him to move further. However, these volumes were the starting point for several of us educated in the English tradition to sense the wholesome significance of Indian thought to current concerns in psychology.

The difficulties of digesting the scholarly volumes of Jadunath Sinha led a few other psychologists to undertake a more modest attempt of preparing introductory manuals of Indian psychology. Included in this category are books by Ramachandra Rao (1962), Kuppuswamy (1985), and Safaya (1976).

Perhaps the most useful of the available books on this subject is Ramachandra Rao's (1962) *Development of Psychological Thought in India.* It is authoritative, insightful, and written by a psychologist who has scholarly acquaintance with the

original sources. Tracing the origins of psychology in India to the *Saṁhitā* literature of the Vedas, Ramachandra Rao discusses the development of psychological ideas in Upaniṣadic thought, Sāṁkhya-Yoga, and Mīmāṁsā systems and in Jainism and Buddhism. He also writes about the contributions of Indian materialists and grammarians and interprets the *Bhagavad Gītā* as "a story of skilful and successful counselling."

Ramachandra Rao concludes his review of the literature with the assertion that "a proper appraisal of the speculations enumerated above is likely to facilitate the resolution of many a tangle in modern psychology and also help in the construction of comprehensive and workable hypotheses concerning man and his personality" (p. 206). Admittedly, the book is not comprehensive. Several other viewpoints in orthodox as well as heterodox systems have not been touched. The treatment of the subject is neither strictly historical nor topic-centered. No serious effort is made to develop any models or state hypotheses on the basis of speculations discussed. Nor is there sufficient exercise to relate the classical insights to contemporary problems.

Safaya's (1976) *Indian Psychology* is an ambitious undertaking. Claimed to be "a critical and historical analysis of the psychological speculations in Indian philosophical literature," the book covers mainly the six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy. Buddhism and Jainism are touched upon in the penultimate chapter. The book contains more sanguine assertions of the supremacy of Indian psychology than a realistic assessment of its limitations. For example, Safaya states at the very outset that his book will "vouchsafe" the fact that "Indian psychology not only exists, but surpasses Western psychology in scope, methodology and validity of conclusions" (p. 5). Not unexpectedly, the book falls far short of providing any convincing evidence for these assertions. As one reviewer of the book put it, "the reader will expect much more from the book than it actually offers. For those who seek new insight and inspiration, this book will be very disappointing. At best, it is a noncritical cataloguing of Indian philosophical discussions of what is now considered the subject matter of psychology" (Haight 1978, p. 75).

Another attempt to present a systematic account of Indian psychology is Kuppuswamy's (1985) *Elements of Ancient Indian Psychology.* One would have thought that a senior psychologist of Kuppuswamy's standing would be able to fill this long-felt need for a credible textbook on the subject. Unfortunately, this book is in some ways more disappointing than the others.

Following the lead of C.A.F. Rhys Davids, there have been several books on Buddhist psychology, many of them published outside India. The list is too large to review here. Only a mention can be made of some of them. What is interesting is that several of the original texts are translated and interpreted in the contemporary context. One example is the book *A Buddhist Doctrine of Experience* by Kochumuttom (1982/1999). This volume is an interpretative translation of Vasubandhu's works. It provides important insights into Buddhist (Yogācāra) psychology of self and consciousness. Other recent works include *Indian Buddhist Theories of Persons: Vasubandhu's "Refutation of the Theory of a Self"* by Duerlinger (2003) and *The Buddhist Unconscious* by Waldron (2003). From the Abhidharma tradition we have Herbert Guenther's book (1957) *Philosophy and*

Psychology in the Abhidharma. Interestingly, several books on Buddhist psychology are written by Sinhalese scholars. These include *The Principles of Buddhist Psychology* by Kalupahana (1987), *Buddhist Psychology of Perception* by Sarachchandra (1958/1994), *The Psychology and Philosophy of Buddhism* by Jayasuriya (1963), *Buddhist Psychotherapy* by Nissanka (2002) and *Buddhism and Psychology* by Kariyawasam (2003). These books are not of uniform standard.

There are a few books on Jaina psychology. These include *Jaina Psychology* by Mehta (1955) and *Some Problems in Jaina Psychology* by Kalghatgi (1961).

Many of the books on Indian psychology coming out of India have some strength, but they also suffer from inadequacies as mentioned. First of all, scholarly books like Jadunath Sinha's volumes are more like historical accounts and hardly touch on issues and problems of current interest to the community of psychologists. Bare ideas bereft of attendant empirical ramifications do not excite researchers pursuing problem-oriented programmatic investigations. A few authors attempted to relate some classical Indian ideas to current concepts and theories in Western psychology. For example, Kuppuswamy (1985) sought to locate the frustration-aggression hypothesis in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. The exercise to find ideas in Indian thought that parallel contemporary psychological notions may be of some historical interest, but such parallels help no more in developing Indian psychology than the reference to Vaiśeṣika speculations on the atomic structure of matter help current Indian physics.

Again, there are writers who claim that Indian psychology contains all that psychology needs and that it is the last word. Such sanctimonious chest beating is seldom conducive to promoting Indian psychology as a scientific discipline. Such claims may be dismissed as no more credible than those who say that Indian psychology is no more than a bunch of semi-religious folk beliefs.

What is glaringly missing in much that was written on Indian psychology until recently is the development of coherent models that would suggest meaningful programs of research rivalling the existing ones. In the ultimate analysis, it is not national pride that should prompt one to study Indian psychology but the possibilities it offers for a better understanding of human nature for progress of psychology in general, and for a better deal for psychology in India in particular. As a philosopher of science, Lakatos points out, scientific progress may be looked at in terms of rival research programs. Indian psychology does offer such programs.

After the declaration of the Pondicherry Manifesto (see http://www.infinityfoundation.com/mandala/i_es/i_es_corne_manifesto_frameset.htm) by about a hundred and fifty Indian psychologists meeting in Pondicherry, there has been a renaissance of sorts and renewed academic interest in Indian psychology. This was followed by a number of small group meetings, national level seminars, and conferences resulting in the publication of a series of edited volumes dedicated to Indian psychology. These include books by Joshi and Cornelissen (2004) and Rao and Marwaha (2005), Rao et al. (2008), Cornelissen et al. (2011). We find in Rao's (2011b) *Cognitive Anomalies, Consciousness and Yoga* a serious attempt to develop a comprehensive system of Indian psychology. The present book is itself an offshoot of the Pondicherry Manifesto.

1.3 Methods of Study

1.3.1 On the Nature of Research in Psychology

To help understand the approach to methodology in Indian psychology, it would be useful to understand what the idea of "research" has come to mean in psychology today. The concept of research in modern psychology is a relatively recent one, and its current practices basically involve collecting data by either "running subjects" in an experiment, or using questionnaires and psychometric scales, and then statistically analyzing the data. This enterprise follows the spirit of a model of search for scientific knowledge which aims at arriving at generalizations that reflect universal laws that govern events everywhere in nature.

Although the founders of modern psychology, Wundt and James, both used the method of introspection to observe what goes on in one's own mind, Wundt's followers in Germany and America could not agree on what was thus observed. The reasons for the lack of consensus among introspectionists have been a topic of much critical examination (Boring 1953; Danziger 1990), and this need not concern us here. As is widely known, Watson's (1913) declaration that the method of introspection is null and void started the behaviorist revolution. Under the influence of this revolution, the first-person reports of what someone observed in her own mind were meticulously avoided, replacing observations of someone else as the only admissible data for psychology.

During the years following Watson's declaration of the behaviorist "manifesto" in 1913, research in physics scaled new heights with unprecedented strides in studies of submolecular phenomena. Despite serious disagreements among the supporters of Einstein's relativity theory and the "Copenhagen interpretation" of quantum physics proposed by Niels Bohr, Heisenberg, and others, the discoveries in physics unleashed powerful technologies ranging from the atomic bomb to electronic appliances working on principles of quantum physics. Dazzled by the success of the developments in physics, a group of philosophers in Austria, called the "Vienna Circle," proposed the view that physics presents the ideal form of search for knowledge in any field. The concept of "operational definition" proposed by the physicist Percy Bridgman was arguably the first one to be incorporated into psychological research. In essence, the idea of operational definition involves the insistence on using observable procedures in measuring phenomena, whether objects, variables, abstract concepts, or directly unobservable events. Thus, hunger, which is something experienced by humans or other organisms, was to be defined not in terms of the feelings of an individual, but in terms of observable events such as the number of hours since the time of last feeding. Similarly, intelligence was to be defined as "that which the intelligence tests measure" since the operations involved in the process of measuring are publicly observable, while what is called intelligence is not open to direct observation.

The idea of operational definition is thus founded on the fundamental principle of empiricism, which suggests that observation is the best, or even the only, basis

for correct knowledge. This idea is often called the "principle of verifiability" which was the cornerstone of the philosophy of logical positivism enunciated by the members of the Vienna Circle. In their view, the truth of any proposition lies entirely and solely in its empirical verification. Although the logical positivists did not believe in metaphysics, or abstract theories of what exists, they nevertheless assumed physicalism, meaning that what exists is only matter in motion which is open to observation. An implication of such an assumption for psychology is that only bodies exist, minds, which are not open to observation, are imaginary and nonexistent phenomena. If, on the other hand, one admits that mental phenomena such as dreams, thoughts, intentions, and others do in fact occur, then they are defined in terms of concurrent physical phenomena such as electrical activity of the brain which is open to observation. The idea here is to "reduce" something abstract into a corresponding concrete entity, or break down a complex whole into its smallest component parts. A popular example of a reductionist approach in psychology is the "mind-brain identity theory": the mind is nothing but functionings of the brain, which are open to observation and verification. A very different implication of the verifiability principle is that any statement expressing value, such as "one *ought* not hurt or kill others" is not verifiable through observations, and hence is meaningless. As can be easily seen, this idea is consistent with the notion of "value-free science."

As described in detail by Smith (1986), behaviorism and logical positivism developed in tandem with each other through continual interactions among their proponents. While behaviorists studied behaviors of rats in mazes and harnessed pigeons in an effort to enunciate laws of learning, logical positivists such as Rudolph Carnap and others clarified the fundamental assumptions and ways of knowing that were silently adopted by behaviorists such as B.F. Skinner. Thus, a physicalist worldview was taken for granted; Skinner routinely used the term mentalism as a pejorative epithet. Following the logical positivists, many psychologists viewed physics as the ideal science; indeed Hergenhahn (1992) suggested that psychologists tend to suffer from "physics envy."

For decades, psychologists followed the ideal of deriving universal laws of nature in trying to define laws of learning applicable equally to animals and humans everywhere and at all times. Likewise, the overall emphasis was on the search for law-like statements verified through systematic observation. The law-like statements would appear either as hunches based on informal observations, or as predictions to test the correctness of a theory. Theories are sets of statements aimed at providing a description of various aspects of nature, and the currently accepted wisdom is to focus on key statements, called hypotheses, which are tentatively treated as universal laws. The truth value of such statements is tested via observations, preferably under experimental conditions. This hypothetico-deductive approach has become widely accepted, and is routinely communicated in the training of modern psychologists.

A standard formula for student theses is to set up hypotheses or predictions using operationally defined concepts, and quantify them with the help of putatively valid psychometric instruments. In the mid-1950s, Cronbach and Meehl (1955) proposed

the concept of *construct validity* to assess how well the psychometric methods measure what they claim to represent. The hypotheses supported via such procedures were to be taken as statements truly descriptive of specific aspects of reality, and the correlations among the phenomena measured defined the connections among the statements. Together such statements were to produce a "nomological network," that is, a set of mutually connected law-like statements supported by observations and together presenting an accurate account of reality. The ideal of the nomological network followed the logical positivist view that an empirically tested theory expressed in the language of physics would accurately describe the structure of the world (see Jones 1975, p. 224).

All or much of the view of the research described above is a standard part of contemporary training in psychology. However, the foundations of this approach are not commonly explained, as they are taken for granted, and the foundations are almost completely derived from logical positivism. While physicalism, or the idea that only matter in motion constitutes reality, is the ontological presupposition; empiricism and verificationism are the basic principles of epistemology, or theory of knowledge. There are a few other implicit principles: that truth is the property of specific statements, for example. The focus on single statements at a time is called "logical atomism" and is reflected in the insistence on testing of hypotheses expressed in single sentences. Such sentences are the ultimate units of knowledge; they are true if supported by observation, false if not.

Objectivism is another such principle, which implies that only what is open to observation on public space and is consensually supported by multiple observers is true, thus denying the relevance of subjective experience in psychological research. Although these issues provide the foundation for most research in contemporary psychology, they are essentially issues in philosophy. Textbooks of psychology commonly tell students that psychology is a *science*, which has established itself as a discipline by "cutting the apron strings" of the mother discipline of philosophy. Thus, anything to do with philosophy is thought to be irrelevant for students of psychology. As a result, most students of psychology do not recognize that foundations of their kind of psychology are mostly defined by logical positivism.

Against this background, it is useful for students of psychology to know that the major principles of logical positivism, namely physicalism, verificationism, logical atomism, have all been severely criticized, squarely refuted, and widely rejected around the sixth and seventh decades of the twentieth century. Carl Popper, for instance, has presented the limitations of physicalism and of a deterministic worldview, and presented detailed arguments for the causal efficacy of thoughts in the domain of consciousness that is denied by physicalism (Poppler and Eccles 1977). He pointed out the untenable conclusion to which strict determinism leads (Popper 1966). More specifically, Popper (1979) showed the limits of the verifiability principle by pointing out that it was impossible to demonstrate the *universal* applicability of a law as it is impossible to observe and cover *all* cases in *any* category. Instead of trying to *verify* the universality of a putative law, he suggested, it was better to test it under special conditions in which the law would *not* apply, and thereby *falsifying* the claim of universality. This implies that a statement is to be

held true only as long it is not falsified. Another devastating critique of logical positivism was offered by Quine (1953/1964) when he refuted the principle of logical atomism by pointing out that a theory, which may be stated in a large number of statements, cannot be proved invalid when one of few of its statements are proven wrong; the overall thrust of the theory can be sustained by making adequate change elsewhere in its expression as a whole. Indeed, as early as in 1967 Passmore declared in his article in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* that "Logical positivism, then, is dead, or as dead as a philosophical movement ever becomes" (Passmore 1967, p. 56). Likewise, in his book on the history of Western philosophy Jones (1975) wrote "positivism as the particular doctrine associated with the Vienna Circle will not be probably revived" (Vol. V, p. 249).

Notwithstanding such declarations of the demise of logical positivism, the research methods it prompted and sanctioned continue to remain at the core of the mainstream of psychology today, and its worldview is becoming ingrained in the eyes of many people. This is particularly true of those enamored by the success of the natural sciences. The continued popularity of research methods grounded in positivism may be attributed partly to some of the benefits its results offer, such as the epidemiological methods which allow us to narrow down our search for causal determinants of a disease through correlational analysis. Partly, the continued popularity of a positivist worldview and research methods may be attributed to the disdain for philosophy cultivated among the students of psychology and the resultant insulation of psychology from the major intellectual developments of recent times. A relative minority of psychologists are, however, well aware of the limits of logical positivism, and follow some or other "post-positivist" perspectives on knowledge (Tolman 1992). Common among such perspectives are *cognitive constructivism* (Piaget 1954), which emphasizes that knowledge is a matter of constructing a theory based on observations and opposes reductionism; *social constructionism* (Berger and Luckmann 1966), which emphasizes the collective role of knowledge seekers in search of truth; *hermeneutics* (Messer et al. 1988), which follows the interpretive approach of the human sciences rather than the tendency to reduce complex and abstract ideas to simple and concrete terms.

With the above perspective on methods, we may now turn to the issue of research in Indian psychology. The search for knowledge in the Indian tradition of psychology did not follow the lines of the research methods inspired by the logical positivist approach to knowledge. It is not simply that significant contributions of Indian psychology antedate the development of modern science, especially physics, but there are certain features of Indian thought that are not convergent with basic principles of logical positivism. First, in the history of Indian thought, the physicalist or materialist worldview was adopted by only a small minority of thinkers, especially by the Lokāyata system. While most other schools of thought accept the role of consciousness in human life, some like the followers of the Sāṁkhya and Yoga schools consider consciousness as an independent component of reality different from matter. More specifically, AdvaitaVedānta, arguably the most prominent school of Indian thought, considers pure consciousness as a primary feature of reality as a whole. Interestingly, the Advaita thinkers consider propositions or

statements as true only until they are falsified,[1] and this approach to knowledge is consistent more with Popper's principle of falsification than with the logical positivist insistence on verification.

Further, a holistic approach has been most dominant in Indian thought, which is reflected, for example, in the common tendency to view suffering in human life as a whole rather than in terms of specific forms of distress. It may be noted that in the Indian medical system of Āyurveda the focus is on the person as a whole in the context of ecological setting and the seasonal variations in it. Such holistic perspectives militate against the strong tendencies toward physical and logical atomism that prevailed under the influence of logical positivism. Finally, the dominant goal pursued in Indian psychology has been the *individual's* spiritual uplift, which implies focus on individual cases—which is starkly different from the focus on universal generalization in much of modern psychology. The individual focus, in turn, makes a person's own experience most relevant. It stands in contrast with the preference for objectivity a tendency toward objectification in today's most popular research methods. This does not mean, however, that there is no place for objectivity or for generalization in Indian psychology. Thus, observation (or *pratyakṣa* in Sanskrit) is viewed as the primary guideline for correct knowledge at the practical level in most schools of Indian thought. Generalizations are not an anathema in Indian psychology either. For example, the progression of a yogin through various higher states of consciousness, or *samādhi*, is apparently presented as a generalization, and is likely based on pooling of observations of the progress across several individual yogins.

Although it is hard to find clear accounts of "research methods" as such in the history of Indian thought, it is not difficult to understand the common ways in search of psychological knowledge that must have been used extensively for centuries. The complex and detailed theories of cognition by Buddhist and Nyāya thinkers would not have been possible without careful observation of the processes of perception and cognition in one's own mind. Self-observation, as in introspection, is an inevitable component of the search for self-knowledge, which is the central theme in Indian psychology. On the other hand, analysis of emotions in the dramaturgical works of *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata and his countless followers, the description of sexual behavior in Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra*, and the nature of social conflicts analyzed by Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* would not have been possible without extensive observations and astute analysis. The generalizations we come across in such works are consistent with the spirit of science, although the authors did not specify any "research methods" as such or provide statistical data and their levels of significance.

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[1]For example, in his commentary on *Siddhāntabindu by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī* Abhyankar (1928/1968) explains that what we call "knowledge" (*pramā*) is the cognition, or a mental state, shaped in the image of an object, that has not (yet) been contradicted or falsified (*abādhita*) by any other means available. This is a paraphrase of Abhyankar's words: *abādhita viṣayākāra antaḥkaraṇa vṛttir hi prametyucyate*| (p. 21).

What is said in the above paragraphs relates mainly to the pre-modern contributions of Indian psychology. Psychologists of today who wish to follow certain essential features of Indian psychology have at their disposal all the methodologies developed in modern times. The field is quite open to judiciously adopt and adapt various methodologies in the investigation of topics relevant to Indian psychology. The adoption of varied methodologies does not mean either their indiscriminate use, or some blind eclecticism where anything goes. The spirit of Indian ways of thinking is pluralistic, and the defense of pluralism follows from the recognition that there are many different phenomena that need to be studied, many different objectives for the search for knowledge. As the Vedas declare, truth is one, but wise persons construe it in different ways. Indeed, with the recent revival of interest in Indian psychology, there is a growing body of literature on topics of Indian psychology that report research based on various contemporary methodologies.

1.3.2 Research Methods in Indian Psychology

As noted, Indian psychology is a school of psychology and not a system of philosophy. As a science, it uses observation as the main tool for its study and research. Speculations and models have their place, but in the final analysis, it is the discovery and application of facts that matter. Concepts should relate to observations, and categories help in their analysis and organization. Observations may be internal and experiential or external and shared. Theories to be fruitful should generate hypotheses that permit verification or falsification and add to progress in understanding a given phenomenon. Genuineness of a science is a function of the methods it employs. This is commonsense wisdom. However, there is no single method in science that is sacrosanct. Science uses a variety of methods appropriate to the subject matter of its study and investigation. Physical sciences use mainly experimental methods and make observations from a third-person perspective. However, experimental methods are not the only methods in science. Astronomy, for example, uses nonexperimental methods of observation.

Observations may be direct or indirect. What is observed may relate to an external object or an internal event within a given system. Observations may be from the perspective of first-person, second-person, or third-person. First-person observations are generally private and cannot be observed directly by others. The experience of pain when one is in pain is an example of first-person observation. The physiological indices that can be observed by the nonexperiencing person from which she can infer that the other person is in pain constitutes the third-person observation. Science in general is more comfortable with third-person rather than first-person observations, because the former are considered to be objective and generalizable. In human sciences, distinguished from physical sciences, the observations can be very complicated because the human being is a very complex system. Further, a person's experiences are subjective and private, and some of them are simply inaccessible in significant ways to others. Human nature as its

subject of study, psychology confronts unique methodological problems. The person is both the object and the subject of the study. She is the one to be observed and at the same time the one who makes the observation. Confounding the difficulty further, the very act of making an observation may somehow alter/influence the observation itself.

The person as a compound of body and mind with a connection to consciousness, as mentioned, may be studied with a focus on the body, mind, or consciousness. When the focus is on the body, psychology is more like a biological science and experimental methods are eminently suitable. Observations in this context can be largely from the third-person perspective and therefore objective in its ordinary sense. However, when the focus shifts to the mind, while experimental methods may still be availed, insistence on third-person observation tends to be somewhat tenuous. Consequently, the scope of observation gets extended to include first-person accounts. In those studies where consciousness is involved, we have a totally different scenario that calls for a very different methodological approach because we may be dealing here with transcognitive states.

What is important to keep in perspective is that a human being does not function exclusively at any one of the different levels of existence—body, mind, or consciousness. A good deal of a person's behavior is a product of all the three aspects. Consequently, psychology has the challenging task of developing and utilizing methods that can handle the inherent complexity of human nature. It has been realized for long that science is not the same in all disciplines. It takes different forms depending on the problems to be investigated (Demos 1960). The usual methods of natural sciences are not sufficient to do justice to "the full range of behaviour and experience of man as a person" (Giorgi 1970). Therefore, a pluralistic methodology is called for in dealing with the complexity of human nature. Experimental methods are important and necessary in the field of psychology, but their "putative supremacy" over others is questionable.

It would not be wrong to say that Indian psychology is not averse to using hypothetico-deductive methodology, where applicable. In fact, a number of theories emanating from Indian thought are quite amenable for such a methodology. One example is the work of Naidu and Pandey (1992), which involved testing hypothesis derived from the theory of *niṣkāma karma* in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Most schools of Indian thought uphold *pratyakṣa* (observation) and inference as valid methods for truth-testing (*pramāṇa*s).

1.3.3 Experimental Methods

Experimental methods used in science place special emphasis on measurement, as mentioned in a previous section. In a typical experiment, attempt is made to measure one or more dependent variables while monitoring and manipulating one or more independent variables. Such a manipulation presupposes that all other relevant variables are kept constant or controlled. In addition to quantification,

scientific method calls for operationalization of the concepts and precision in their connotations. Operationalization involves objectivity. Thus an experimental protocol should conform to these basic criteria—operationalization and clarity of concepts used, objectivity of the phenomena investigated, identification of dependent and independent variables, and control of others. In addition, repeatability is considered a necessary precondition for an acceptable scientific finding. In physical sciences all this is entirely possible. However, in human sciences like psychology, the applicability of these standard criteria raises some relevant questions. These are especially pertinent from the perspective of Indian psychology.

Can we use experimental methods and conduct laboratory-based research in Indian psychology? Are the concepts and constructs in Indian psychology such that they can be operationalized? Are the data we seek to collect in Indian psychology sufficiently objective and repeatable? These questions are not unique to Indian psychology. They can be raised, and in fact are raised, in other areas of psychological research as well. It has been generally recognized that operationalization and objectivity have no absolute meaning and that they are relative to the subject under study. For example, psychoanalytic concepts may not be operationalized in the same way the concepts in physiological psychology or psychophysics are. Operationalizing subjective experience would have different criteria. Similarly, objectivity has different criteria appropriate for different approaches to observation and description of events and thought. Referring to an alternative meaning of objectivity in subjective experiences, Maslow (1971) called it "Taoistic objectivity." It is noted that observations are generally made in natural settings with a particular orientation. That orientation determines to an extent the observation, because observation by a human subject results in an experience. "Loving" perception and "hateful" perception of the same object give rise to distinctive and variable perceptions.

Again, repeatability presupposes observation under identical conditions. The difficulty of providing identical conditions in human functioning rules out the possibility of precise replicability. Human behavior is often shaped by events that are not easy to replicate. Further, the requirement of replicability tends to exclude a significant amount of information relating to human functioning (Buck 1976).

Despite all these qualifications, we may note that some areas of Indian psychology are eminently suitable for experimentation and laboratory research. This is an already recognized fact. Meditation research is a case in point. Meditation is an important research topic in Indian psychology. There is voluminous experimental data collected under careful conditions, exploring a variety of variables. These include investigation of neurophysiological correlates of meditative states, the influence of meditation on cognitive and other kinds of skills, and the benefits of meditation for human health and wellness.

At the same time, we may note also some of the limitations of such research. For example, there is need for greater conceptual clarity and operationalization than is the case. Similarly, experimental control and replication deserve special attention (Rao 2011b). Equally important is the recognition that some areas of research are beyond experimental manipulation and are closed to objectifying. Prolonged

practice of meditation, for example, is believed to lead in some successful practitioners to a state of pure consciousness. Inasmuch as consciousness as-such is pure subjectivity, the exercise of finding physiological correlates of such states may be simply an attempt in vain.

Without denying the useful role of experimental methods in psychological research, it is necessary to recognize that there are other methods to study the person, which are equally relevant and necessary for psychological research. Freud's insights, for example, are based on observations in a clinical setting and not derived by testing hypothesis in an experimental setup. Unfortunately, there is an overemphasis on experimentation in the professional literature, a consequence of the attempts to model psychology on Newtonian physics. This leads to what is described as the "putative supremacy" of experimentation over other methods. Indian psychology would be served better without subscribing to such an "idolatry" of experimentation (Danziger 1990), just as we should not be tempted to reject scientific methodology in general as a necessary tool for research. Here are some of the other methods Indian psychology may profitably employ in its research beyond experiment. Actually, several of these methods are also used, though less frequently, in conventional psychological research.

1.3.4 Phenomenological Methods

Experimental methods, as we noted, depend essentially on third-person observations. However, as we are also aware, human functioning involves a great deal of not-publicly verifiable subjective events. A great deal of what goes on within each of us is private and impervious to public observation. Any psychology that ignores this would be poorer for it. Therefore, phenomenological methods are also required to complement the objective methods to make psychological research wholesome and complete.

Phenomenology is considered a "science of experience." Husserl called it "descriptive psychology." Phenomenological psychology primarily deals with "subjective experiences." A variety of methods are available to deal with subjective experiences. Once widely used, prominent and the earliest of them all is introspection, which was extensively employed during the early phase of modern psychological research and advocated as a necessary method by the founders of experimental psychology, William James and Wilhem Wundt. However, during the heyday of behaviorism and its aftermath, as noted earlier, introspection fell into neglect and disuse, if not outright rejection, because psychologists became increasingly suspicious of subjectivity as they tended to accord factual reality only to external events. They tended to consider internal processes, images, thoughts, and fantasies as falling outside the scope of scientific psychological research.

This was unfortunate, and part of the blame for this state of affairs rests with those who attempted to justify the use of introspection as a valid method of psychological research by treating subjective data as observation, ignoring its

experiential context. In other words, they sought to elevate introspective first-person phenomena into third-person data. When a first-person methodology such as introspection is employed, the concern has been to observe and not to experience. The attempt is to obtain an impersonal and objective account of what is going on within oneself. The introspecting individual is ideally one who reports a given state of mind in much the same way a machine records whatever it is monitoring, as, for example, the case of a thermometer recording temperature. Critics of the use of introspection as a viable method, such as Auguste Compte, argue that it is an essentially impossible task for the experiencing person to be an observer of his/her own experience. "The thinking individual," wrote Compte, "cannot split himself in two, one part of which would think while the other would watch the former thinking. The organ observed and the organ observing being, in the case, identical, how could any such act of observation take place? This supposedly psychological method is therefore radically faulty in principle" (quoted from Vermesch 1999, p. 19). This insight is of course not new. The idea that it is impossible to be both perceiver and perceived at the same time is clearly stated in the *Yoga Sūtras* (4–20).

Many of the methodological improvements to introspective techniques undertaken since the time of Brentano and James in the name of "systematic introspection" and "experimental introspection" by psychologists such as Binet in France, Külpe in Germany, and Titchner in the United States are important. They have a place in psychological research. However, they are all aimed at making introspective reports inter-subjectively reliable by transforming experience into observation. Even the so-called method of phenomenological reduction is one of making "observations" out of experience (Husserl 1931/1962). In all these cases the basic difference between observation and experience is not adequately appreciated. It is assumed that attentive experience bereft of expectations, assumptions, biases, and prejudices is observation. It is questionable, however, whether a mere intellectual exercise could in principle enable one to effectively suspend the "natural attitude" so as to observe the phenomena in their pure state. Even if it were possible to arrive at such phenomenal data via reduction or by suitably refined methods of introspection, do such data capture the "what it is like" character of experience? In other words, can one ever transform an experience into an observation even at the level of the first-person? Can experience per se be observed? In the Indian tradition, experience is an item for *realization* and not of *observation.*

One way of circumventing this problem attempted in Indian philosophical thought is to deny the distinction between subject and object at a fundamental level. The manifest dichotomy between them at the empirical level is regarded as an unreal appearance. At the more profound level of being, accessible with disciplined effort, it is believed, the subject–object distinction disappears. Knowing truth in a representational form gives way to a different mode of realizing truth intuitively. In this view, the former gives us only the appearance of reality, whereas the latter involves experiencing reality as-such in an unmediated mode. The endeavor here is to seek and participate in pure conscious experience and realize truth in one's being. Realization involves participation and entering into a relation of *identity* rather than of *representation*.

It is asserted that a pure conscious experience is intrinsically authentic; it does not require external validation. As mentioned, in experiencing states of pure consciousness, there is the assumption of *realization*, which is distinct from *understanding*. Realization engenders instant conviction of certainty. Its validity is reflexive. How about those who have not reached a state of realization, but are on a path to it? How to relate their experience to reality? Here, Indian tradition resorts to the second-person perspective, which closes, in a sense, the "explanatory gap" between the first- and third-person accounts.

This problem is not unlike the one the introspective techniques in general face. The resolution of the problem in the Indian tradition is achieved by the second-person role of the teacher as a mediator. In the Indian tradition the *guru* (preceptor) is an important and indispensable part of any training program to reach higher states of consciousness. The *guru* should be the one who has traveled the path before. He serves as the reference point and provides a second-person position. He is the "caravan leader" who guides his pupil mindful of checkpoints and signposts in transit. The *guru* plays an important role of guidance, helping the practitioner to improve and progress along the path he knows. Thus the *guru* occupies an intermediate position between first-person experience of the practitioner and the final self-certifying state of pure consciousness, playing an indispensable role of mediation and providing a second-person perspective to supplement third-person and first-person approaches. The first-person methodology with second-person mediation provides for subjective and nonrelational authenticity and in-group inter-subject validity. We have here important methodological addition to psychological research, suggested by Indian psychology.

Interestingly, it would seem that practice of meditation might enable a person to make a more objective recording of her observation than any other phenomenological methods. It may be recalled that the person's cognitive processing is embellished in some ways by his acquired biases and attitudes, including the mechanics of such processing. Meditation is considered a way of overcoming some of these limitations. Concentration-induced forms of meditation involving focused attention help to restrict the incoming extraneous sensory inputs. The passive forms of meditation focus on noninterpretative reception of inputs so as to eliminate internal biases. Both forms of mediation are indeed complementary and merge into each other in the advanced stages. Successful meditation is believed to enable the practitioner to achieve a state of *samādhi,* where all cognitive embellishments are controlled and the person has access to unbiased truth. In other words, once the external noise and internal biases are eliminated in a state of meditation, subjective experience loses its capricious variability and becomes objective in a significant sense. Serious and systematic cultivation of *vairāgya*—affective neutrality—is crucial in avoiding biases arising from the effects of the "defence mechanisms" employed by an active ego. Thus meditation appears to serve as a useful technique for studying subjective experience objectively by thus eliminating biases that distort one's experience. This indeed seems to be a significant step beyond the so-called phenomenological reduction advocated by Husserl (1931/1962). The method opens up enormous possibilities for studying neurophenomenology of consciousness for one thing.

1.3.5 Other Methods of Relevance

There are a number of other methods psychologists use that have relevance to Indian psychology. These include field studies and observation of naturally occurring events. The techniques used include surveys, questionnaires, rating scales, interviews, participant observation, and content analysis. Since some of the significant phenomena of interest in Indian psychology are nonordinary forms of knowing and interaction, the first step in their investigation would be collecting spontaneously occurring cases such as premonitive experiences, enabling one to have knowledge of future events. These cases may be unique or recurring. One may be able to collect useful information on the variety and consistency of the case material, frequency of their occurrence, and the circumstances associated with these events. An analysis of them could yield important clues for making further systematic studies to understand the nature of phenomena involved. Also, the concepts and ideas derived from them can be the subject of further exploration and confirmation by other methods.

One method that is already used in Indian psychology with some useful results is the single case study. Anand Paranjpe, for example, studied a reputed healer in Maharashtra (Paranjpe 2014) and an outstanding saint, Ramaṇa Maharshi, Bhakta Tukārāma, and Lokamanya Tilak (see Chap. 9 in this volume). K.R. Rao explored Mahatma Gandhi as a case study to illustrate some of the ideas in Indian psychology (see Chap. 10 in this volume).

The single case study method involves exploring the intricacies in life of a particular person to illustrate a concept or theory. Also, such studies may help to derive new concepts. They would also help to untangle and clarify ideas and find "subjective validation" for them. Since the focus is here on unique persons/events, the question of replication is not relevant. Single case studies because of their depth of exploration will be able to capture the richness of life in its various dimensions, which is simply beyond the scope experimental methods. This method is necessarily holistic and gives a comprehensive understanding of human experience as no experiment can do. As Lucien Buck remarks: "only an understanding of a multiplicity of variables along with the 'over determination' of individual acts and the variety of functions served by behavior, attitudes, and fantasies can begin to explore the idiosyncratic integration that can be called a person" (1976, p. 49). There are already a number of single case studies in psychology. Examples include studies of Martin Luther and Mahatma Gandhi by Erikson (1958/1962, 1969). G.W. Allport (1964) discussed different forms of studying single cases. In addition, Indian psychology may also utilize the rich literary resources available in various Indian languages.

From the above discussion, it may be surmised that Indian psychology can use a variety of behavioral as well as phenomenological methods and can undertake laboratory-based experimental investigation as well as field and case studies in their natural setting. However, with its conception of person as a compound of body and mind with connection to consciousness, Indian psychology places special emphasis on subjectivity and the ways of studying the person without reducing subjectivity

into artificial, awkward, and untenable forms. It thus subscribes to methodological pluralism. Without rejecting objectivity, control, and simplicity of experimental exploration, Indian psychology recognizes the need to go beyond experimentation to usefully capture the richness and manifold complexity of human experience to embrace and accommodate phenomenological methods as coequals. In the process, Indian psychology may be able to carve out its own unique methods as it progresses as a legitimate system of psychology.

1.4 How Is It Different?

From the preceding account of its scope, subject matter, and methods of study it is clear that Indian psychology is different in significant respects from the current mainstream psychology. It is also clear that we have here a viable alternative view of human nature that deserves to be looked into carefully to further psychological knowledge in a wider context. It would not follow, however, that Indian psychology is ready to replace psychology as we know it now. It would be factually incorrect to say that current psychological knowledge is false. What is reasonable to suggest, however, is that the psychological map we now have is incomplete and in some respects misleading. It needs to be redrawn to be more inclusive and open to the broad spectrum of complex human life, instead of being needlessly restrictive to the so-called objective data. Psychology needs to uphold the warm and salient features of life and not confine itself to studying chilling formulae restricted to the mechanics of behavior. Humans are more than instinct-driven animals. From the contours we have tried to sketch, Indian psychology appears to provide the needed broader perspective. Whether the alternative suggested would truly represent a paradigmatic shift or a simple extension of the current perspective is something that only the future can tell. In the meanwhile, we are not without sufficient justification in pursuing Indian psychology in the hope of finding a better and more fruitful way of studying human nature, because the respects in which Indian psychology and the current mainstream psychology differ are not simply striking but have profound implications for the future of psychology in India and beyond.

The focus of Indian psychology is on the *agent/subject* of experience and not on the *object* of experience, because the person is the central concern. The distinctive feature of the person is consciousness. Consciousness is qualitatively different from the mind; and the mind is more than the body. The manifest subjectivity in the person is the joint relation of consciousness, mind, and body. Consequently, it may not be properly understood without taking all the three into consideration. Internal events are as real as the external happenings, and they are just as relevant to psychology. Therefore, the study of first-person experience is as important in psychological studies as third-person observation. Consequently, there is need for methodological expansion and inclusiveness, which Indian psychology can provide.

In the Western psychological tradition, consciousness is no more than a quality of experience accessible to introspection. It is considered either identical with the mind or a species, a subcategory, of the mind. Consciousness in the Indian tradition means much more than a quality of experience. There are here important differences between Western views and Indian psychology. The crucial difference is the basic distinction made between consciousness as-such and the mind in Indian psychology. In the Western psychological tradition since Descartes and Locke, mind and consciousness are used interchangeably. In the Indian tradition, a sharp and meaningful distinction is made between the two. This distinction is crucial in that it has several important psychological implications, theoretical as well as methodological. These become clearer as we move to discussion of Indian psychological ideas in the following chapters.

Psychology in the West is essentially transactional, concerned mainly with the mind as a cognitive instrument. Consequently, it is generally content with exploring the sensory-motor channels of thought, passion, and action. The dominant theme of classical Indian psychological thought signifies, however, a psychology of transcendence, a study of the mind in relation to pure consciousness.

Indian psychology is value-oriented and adds a new dimension to psychology, especially in its applied aspects. Western psychology in its attempts to study psychology as a positive science like physics or biology, ignoring its normative aspect, has in a significant sense dehumanized psychology. Since values touch almost every aspect of human functioning, psychology sans values can hardly claim to understand human nature in its existential context.

Adding a spiritual dimension to human functioning, Indian psychology helps to open up new possibilities for enhancing human potentials, for personal transformation, and for better psychological health and well-being.

Those familiar with Indian thought are aware that more secular interpretations and naturalistic explanations of it are also possible. However, for historical reasons, they did not become a significant part of Indian ethos and practices. What is of particular interest is that the spiritual dimension as conceived in the Indian tradition is not opposed to naturalism as-such. In a sense, Indian thought finds organic relationships between such dichotomies as subject and object, individual and society, secular and sacred, natural and supernatural.

Table 1.1 summarizes the salient differences between Indian psychology and the mainstream psychological thought today, which is designated as Western psychology.

To sum up, Western psychology is limited to studying biopsychosocial processes. Indian psychology extends the scope of psychology to study biopsychosocial-spiritual processes. Its concern goes well beyond the method to study human beings to include a coherent theory, which current psychology is conspicuously lacking. Consequently, Indian psychology deals with conditions of existence. It has a metaphysical base and is anchored in relevant epistemology. Indeed, its philosophical preoccupation is its strength and not its weakness.

Indian psychology is thus a system of psychology which has a broader framework and wider perspective than Western psychology. It involves a search for

Table 1.1 Differences between Indian psychology and Western psychology

Area	Indian psychology	Western psychology
Focus	Person	Environment
Emphasis	Subjective experience	Objective observation
Method	Pluralistic methodology	Supremacy of experimental
Approach	Synthetic and holistic	Analytical
Ego	Deconstruction	Adjustment
Value	Value-driven	Value-neutral
Subjective events	Real and relevant	Not relevant
First-person versus third-person	Both necessary	Only third-person
Application	Transforming the person for the better	Maintaining balance, with average as norm
Mental health	Cultivate and promote	Repair and rebuild

coherent and comprehensive theories. It includes more areas of study, and employs methodological pluralism. Subjectivity and first-person experience are cardinal characteristics of human nature. Any psychological system that ignores them is at best incomplete. While emphasizing that subjectivity is an important dimension of human functioning, Indian psychology has appropriate methodology to scientifically study it. These methods are different and may be seen in some ways as superior to several currently available phenomenological methods. Indian psychology strives toward objective phenomenology, opening the possibility of making subjective experiences objective. Thus Indian psychology can extend the scope of psychological inquiry to include, among others, such areas as neurophenomenology and psychological aesthetics. We may no longer consider internal events as unreal or irrelevant to psychological inquiry.

Another significant aspect of Indian psychology, as noted earlier, is that it is value-driven. This emphasis on the value dimension has important implications. Psychology should deal with real human issues and not shy away because of so-called "scientific" considerations. Values touch on almost every issue of human functioning. There is indeed an unavoidable need to recognize that the enterprise of science is not value-free. Indian psychology is an example of a value structure that could guide psychological inquiry.

In Indian psychology, a crucial distinction is made between the ego and the self in a way and manner that is different from Western psychology. The *self* is the genuine and unchanging essence of the person. It is masked by the ego. Human endeavor is therefore one of controlling and even eliminating, if possible, the ego to discover one's true *self*. This would mean that psychological health does not consist in the mere adjustment of the ego but in its control, deconstruction, and ultimate elimination.

Finally, Indian psychology opens the doors to enhance human potentials in the way the psychology we do today does not. The process of unconditioning the person appears to be a unique feature of Indian psychology. It has the potential to

make pure conscious states accessible to the person. Associated with these states are three levels of excellence; cognitive excellence, extracognitive excellence, and transcognitive excellence. Cognitive excellence may be seen in acts of creativity and similar enhanced cognitive skills. Extracognitive excellence is illustrated in events that involve phenomena like extrasensory perception and other *siddhis* mentioned in the *Yoga Sūtras*. Transcognitive excellence is seen in mystical experiences and other transpersonal states. Several of these phenomena and methods associated with their study are discussed in the following chapters in some detail.

Chapter 2
Cultural Climate and Conceptual Roots of Indian Psychology

Indian psychology is situated in the cultural and social context of the Indian tradition even as Western psychology has developed over centuries under the influence of the European culture and society followed by the American. Search for knowledge, whether in psychology or other disciplines, is unavoidably a social enterprise. No person is an island; we all learn at home, and in schools, and neighborhoods; and the ideas we assimilate in the process provide the foundation on which we build our understanding of the world. Sociologists of knowledge (Mannheim 1929/1936; Berger and Luckmann 1966) have pointed out how the search for knowledge is largely a matter of social construction; even "facts" reported by scientists are deeply shaped by the interaction among scientists, their assistants and technicians, and so on (Latour and Woolgar 1986). Indian and Western psychologies had grown over centuries in distinct cultures that were continents apart and had minimal contact with each other. As such, they developed in different directions as guided by different cultural themes and social institutions. In this chapter, we attempt to identify distinctive aspects of the long history of Indian culture that shaped psychological knowledge in specific and significantly different ways from the development of modern psychology and sketch the conceptual foundations of Indian psychology.

2.1 The Beginning

At first blush, myths and stories, especially very old ones, would appear to be irrelevant to the "science" of psychology. As is well known, modern psychology accepts the Darwinian view of the development of species, but the opposition to evolutionism by the ancient Biblical account of creation continues till this day. Psychology is not immune to the debate over this issue. Although the mainstream of modern psychology would tend to ignore the voices asking for the teaching of theory of "Intelligent Design" in schools, it is true that spiritual issues are assigned to pastoral counseling done in churches, while university trained counselors and therapists would be strictly restricted to "secular" issues. There are more subtle

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ways in which the opposition between science and the Church has shaped contemporary psychology; the mind–body dualism as defined by Descartes in the seventeenth century under the shadow of Galileo's inquisition is a case in point. As we shall see, the myth of creation of the universe in India was radically different from that in the Genesis chapter of the Bible, with very different implications and consequences on the development of psychology in India.

In the *Ṛg Veda*, which is the earliest extent text in the history of India, there are several hymns about the creation of the universe. In one such hymn called the Nāsadīya Sūkta (*Ṛg Veda*, 10.129), the sage wonders about what it might have been like at the time of the very beginning of it all. Here is an excerpt from its English translation.

> There was neither nonexistence nor existence then; there was neither the realm of space nor the sky which is beyond. What stirred? Where? In whose protection, was there water, bottomlessly deep?
> There was neither death nor immortality then. There was no distinguishing sign of night nor of day. That one breathed, windless, by its own impulse. Other than that there was nothing beyond …
> Desire came upon that one in the beginning; that was the first seed of mind …
> Who really knows? Who will here proclaim it? Whence was it produced? Whence is this creation? The gods came afterwards, with the creation of this universe. Who then knows whence it has arisen?
> Whence this creation has arisen – perhaps it formed itself, or perhaps it did not – the one who looks down on it, in the highest heaven, only he knows – or perhaps he does not know. (Translated by Doniger 1981, pp. 25–26)

The agnostic tone of this myth of creation sets the tone for future discussions of the intractable issue of who, if anybody or anything, created the universe and with what purpose. It forestalls a dogmatic belief in this matter even among those who would later take the Vedas as providing unquestionable claims. Note how gods are put into place; there is no creator God to be blamed for all the evil in the universe He created. Given the continuing controversy in the West over evolutionism versus "Intelligent Design," this ancient perspective from India stands in sharp contrast. The relevance of this hymn to psychology should be clear if we note that it recognizes some form of desire (*kāmaḥ*) to emerge and become the "seed of the mind" (*manaso retaḥ*) as a primeval entity in the course of the evolution of the universe. Insofar as having a desire implies being conscious in the first place, consciousness is viewed as having emerged prior to the emergence of matter. This priority of consciousness has further implied its *primacy* in subsequent conceptual frameworks. Note now that the common but infrequently spoken view in modern times is that life first somehow arose in a puddle of chemicals, and that consciousness arose much later in the course of evolution of homo sapiens simply as a means to improved adaptation to the (material) environment. This view makes consciousness a mere product, and a mere appendage, to "reality" constituting nothing but matter in motion. In sharp contrast, in the Indian tradition, consciousness is viewed in the course of evolution not only as primordial, but also is given primacy in the most dominant perspectives in psychology.

As to which came first, consciousness or matter, is an intractable enigma like the question, which came first, chicken or the egg? A typical Indian perspective on this issue is illustrated by a little story which may be cited here. A little boy meets Śiva, the god who is said to oversee the dissolution of the world. The child asks him: Who is your father? He answers: Viṣṇu, the sustainer of the world. And who is your grandfather? The answer: Brahmā, the creator. And who is your great grandfather? Myself, says Śiva. The point of this paradoxical answer is the assumption that there is a cyclical process of creation, sustenance, and destruction of things in the universe; the question of which comes first is redundant. No god has primacy; the trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, the three are different faces of the same underlying reality. Although commonly presented in human forms, they are simply symbolic representations of the basic processes of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of things and creatures in the universe. This implies the cyclical nature of time in the Indian tradition (Deshpande 1979), which stands in sharp contrast with the common Western idea of the "Time's Arrow" (Blum 1951) which implies that time can pass only one way: from past to future.[1] This view of time has further spawned the notion of "perpetual progress" implying that accomplishments and wealth in the life of individuals, as well as the increase in the Gross Domestic Product of nations, must keep on rising forever—which is a questionable idea.

The Indian notion of the cyclical nature of time provides a radically different perspective on such issues, not only of nature, but also of human nature and human ideals. As to human ideals, it is common in the Indian tradition to question the value of perpetual progress or ever-improving accomplishments, and to seek the intrinsic value of the unchanging bedrock of human existence in pure consciousness. This is an issue we shall return to at the end of this chapter.

Another point to note about the Nāsadīya Sūkta is that it suggests that there was something there at the beginning of the universe that lies beyond the fundamental dualities of existence versus inexistence, death versus immortality, and so on. Here there is more than a hint at the assumption of something, the One from which the multiplicity in the universe arose. This idea of the many arising from the One is repeatedly mentioned in the Upaniṣads, philosophical treatises inspired by the Vedas. Interestingly, the Nāsadīya Sūkta views the *desire* to multiply and to procreate as a primordial tendency traced back to the very beginning of the universe. Implicit in this idea is a seed of thinking about organic evolution.

Although no clear theory of evolution is presented in classical Indian texts, it is generally believed that human beings are an integral part of the wide spectrum of life on earth in a way that is consistent with the perspective on life encountered in

[1]In more recent times, the views about the nature of time are changing and getting highly complex in light of developments in Einstein's theory of relativity as well as quantum mechanics. These new developments do not appear to have started influencing psychological thinking as yet. So the discussion here is limited to the differing views of time in Indian and Western thought in the history of psychology.

modern biology. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.10.2), we are told that all creatures, whether insects or animals, all have come from a single Being. According to a common expression in Sanskrit, there is a continuity of life in nature extending from the lowly blade of grass to Brahmā, the creator God (*ā brahma-stamba-paryanta*). This view of continuity of forms of life is consistent with the concept of Brahman as the immanent principle characterized by being, consciousness, and bliss (*sat, cit,* and *ānanda*); consciousness is viewed as being present in varying degrees in plants, insects as well as monkeys and other animals. In early twentieth century, the Indian scientist Jagdish Chandra Bose tried to show signs of consciousness in plants, and more recently the idea of consciousness in subatomic particles is being suggested in studies of quantum physics (Stapp 1993). The view of consciousness as a pervasive and fundamental principle of reality clearly provides a unique place for psychology among the plethora of sciences.

2.2 *Ṛtam*: Truth and Order

In the Vedas there is the concept called "*ṛtam,*" which has twin connotations: *First*, it means truth, and *second*, it is suggestive of an inexorable order of events in the universe. There is an important implication of this double meaning. It is that truth is discovered by finding a constant and repeatable pattern of events. This reminds us of a crucial concept that is foundational for science, namely searching for truth through the discovery of universal laws of nature. This being said, it does not follow that India witnessed the same enthusiasm for the discovery of the laws of nature that was seen in Europe since the dawn of modern science when Francis Bacon (1561–1626) introduced the idea of collecting facts and making generalizations. What fascinated the Indian imagination more is a stricter definition of truth than universal laws of nature.

Another Vedic concept, called the *sat,* illustrates the focus on the search for truth in a different sense that is uncommon in contemporary English usage and hence needs some explanation. This is not simply an abstract and abstruse philosophical issue; as we shall soon see, the issue has at its basis claims to the significance of an extraordinary state of consciousness—which is a problem for psychology. Like so many other terms, the term *sat*, like *satyam* which is often used as its synonym, have several different connotations (see Zalkikar 1978, pp. 943–946). Although both terms have some common positive connotations such as good or authentic, the term *satyam* connotes *validity* of a proposition, proven to be correct through critical examination of epistemic criteria, such as observation, reasoning, or simply the testimony of a trustworthy person. By contrast, the term *sat* has been used in a more stringent sense, as for instance to indicate existence as opposed to inexistence (*asat*) in the very title of the hymn Nāsadīya Sūkta mentioned above. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (8.3.5) explains *satyam* as a compound of *sat*+*ti*+*yam* where *sat* means that which is immortal, or unchanging; *ti* means that which is mortal or open to change; and *yam* is a bridge that holds them together. In other words, *sat* implies an

absolute truth that can never be falsified, while *satyam* implies what is found to be true so far, but, like truths of science, remains open for revision in light of fresh observations and argument. Staying within this tradition, in the Advaita system the term *sat* is used to designate truth that is immortal in the sense that it remains unfalsified forever, sustaining its validity in the past, present, and the future (*trikāla-abādhita-satyam*). According to the Advaita viewpoint, *sat* stands for existence, a feature of Brahman, the single eternal and ubiquitous principle underlying all that exists. This distinction between *sat* and *satyam* is important for psychology in the Indian tradition since it is in the *experience* of a higher state of consciousness that *sat* is said to be discovered, not in the wakeful state in which most search for knowledge commonly occurs.

To help clarify the psychological significance of this idea of an unfalsifiable truth, it may be noted that, according to the Advaita tradition, *sat* as a higher order truth (which may be thought of as *absolute* Truth indicated by using capital T as distinguished from *contingent* truths represented by truth with a lower case t) by finding out what remains as an unchanging foundation for the "I" as knower. This foundation is pure consciousness underlying the parade of changing images of the self that we witness through the passage of life. In a similar way, Patañjali's Yoga suggests bringing the continuous flow of thoughts to a standstill to help attain the same experience. It should be clear that dealing with self-images or the flow of thoughts is a psychological issue, a matter of doing, not simply of some philosophical speculation.

2.3 Pluralism and the Notion of Multiple Perspectives

There is in the *Ṛg Veda* (1.164.46) a brief sentence which may be translated in English to mean that "truth is one, but the wise speak of it in different ways" (*ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti*). This simple idea has profound implications that manifest in different ways throughout the Indian cultural tradition. For instance, the wise men of the Upaniṣadic, Buddhist, or Jain traditions, who struggled to find answers too many crucial issues concerning the human condition, are thought to have come up with different perspectives on some common underlying truths. Such a belief leads to an atmosphere where the differences among them are thought of as negotiable through debates among the wise men, rather than conflicts to be solved by killing each other. It results in tolerance and mutual respect of different religions, which is reflected in the fact that for over two millennia, Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains have most commonly constructed caves and temples next to each other rather than destroying down the creations of others. As is well known, Christian, Zoroastrian, and Jewish communities that fled persecutions in the lands of their origin have settled on the west coast of India and have lived in peace adding to the multifaith society of India starting as early as the first century CE when Thomas, one of Jesus's Apostles, traveled to Kerala and started a Church there.

The same spirit of mutual respect among different schools of thought is manifest in *Sarva-darśana-saṁgraha*, a compendium of the diverse schools of thought composed by Sāyaṇa-Mādhava in the fourteenth century CE. It includes a score of orthodox as well as "heretical" perspectives, without excluding even the least popular views of the materialist followers of Cārvāka school, thus displaying the inclusive rather than exclusivist spirit of the tradition. In Jainism, we find an approach to knowledge called *anekāntavāda*, which provides a rationale showing how a variety of perspectives emerge when founded on differing assumptions about issues that remain unresolved. The result of all such streams of thought is the pluralist approach accommodating varied perspectives on life, living side-by-side with minimum of overt and deadly conflict among them. This is not to suggest that intolerance among believers in various faiths has not existed in India, for it has; but to identify sources of the tradition that may have helped mitigate the poison of intolerance, and the possible contribution to such mitigation through the understanding and application of some basic psychological principles.

From the point of view of psychology, the underlying principle involves a perspective on the nature of cognitive processes, which says that it is usually possible to construct different meanings or implications following from the same data given in observation. In modern psychology, Kelly (1955) enunciated this idea as a form of "constructive alternativism," meaning that we can view the same data in alternative ways. Indeed, the ability to do so underlies the creation of different theories based on identical sets of data, and to evaluate their relative merits by construing and testing diverse hypotheses. Without such ability, no progress in science is possible. As we shall see in a later chapter in this book, psychologists of the Indian tradition have come up with constructivist theories of cognition, and their applications in improving self-understanding.

2.4 States of Consciousness and Types of Knowledge

The *Māṇḍūkya*, which is one of the later Upaniṣads, as mentioned, deals with states of consciousness, their nature, and their deep implications for the knowledge of the self and of the world at large. It identifies four states of consciousness: wakeful, dream, deep sleep, and a fourth one simply called the Fourth State (*caturtham, turīyā avasthā*). The wakeful state, it says, is characterized by being oriented outward; it perceives objects of the external world and indulges in them. In dreaming attention is directed inward, and one experiences images in the inner world, while in deep sleep attention is not turned either inward or outward, and one experiences a form of bliss. The Fourth State, however, is quite different. In it attention is turned neither inward, nor outward, and not even both ways; it is neither cognitive nor noncognitive. It is essentially unspeakable, unthinkable, and ungraspable; it is in this state that the true Self is directly experienced. This experience itself is the *ātman* (*sa ātmā*).

As can be easily seen, it is the account of the indescribable Fourth State that marks a unique and distinctive contribution of Indian psychology. The *Māṇḍūkya* provides the core insight that was followed up by many scholars and sages for centuries, particularly by Gauḍapāda sometime between 300 and 500 CE, and by Śaṅkara in the ninth century. Śaṅkara (788–820), a most influential thinker of the Indian tradition, in fact considers the *Māṇḍūkya* as representing the essence of his AdvaitaVedānta system. The insight of this Upaniṣad that the *self* is directly experienced in the Fourth State is crucial for Indian psychology since self-realization has been viewed as the highest goal in life assuring the total annihilation of suffering and the attainment of the highest good (*niḥśreyeasa*) in life. As we shall see later in this chapter, the views of what constitutes the highest good vary from school to school in Indian thought. However, most schools have developed techniques for attaining the ideal state they conceive of, and aspire to, and in the process they have developed alternative forms of applied psychology. The AdvaitaVedānta, for instance, has come up with an elaborate method for attaining self-realization through the experience of the Fourth State by engaging in critical self-examination, while Patañjali's Yoga has developed a step-by-step process leading to a similar goal through concentrative meditation. Here we may note that self-knowledge which, according to the *Māṇḍūkya*, is revealed in the Fourth State, is qualitatively different from knowledge attained in wakeful or dream states. Some other Upaniṣads make a clear distinction between two different kinds of knowledge, called *vidyā* and *avidyā*, as mentioned earlier. Since such a distinction is practically absent in Western thought, and since it is crucial in the Indian context, this needs some explanation.

According to the *Śvetāśvtara Upaniṣad* (5.1), *vidyā* is knowledge about the imperishable (*akṣara*), meaning the unchanging *Ātman/Brahman*, while *avidyā* is knowledge about the perishable (*kṣara*), i.e., the world of objects that is subject to change. It may be noted that in the Sāṁkhya system, *akṣara* suggests *puruṣa* or the *self* as revealed in pure consciousness, while *kṣara* designates *prakṛti*, the principle of materiality manifest in the world of objects. Insofar as the prefix "a" suggests lack of something, *avidyā* means lack of *vidyā*. And since the word *vidyā* is often used to mean knowledge, *avidyā* is sometimes translated to mean ignorance. This causes confusion because *avidyā* does *not* mean ignorance; it is a technical term that means only the absence of *vidyā* as a transcognitive experience of the Self, but implies all sorts of knowledge about objects perceived through the senses and comprehended with the use of reason. A good way of understanding the two types of knowledge involved here is to explain the distinction between *svarūpa jñāna* on the one hand and *vṛtti jñāna* on the other. Here *sva* means the Self, and *svarūpa jñāna* is what is discovered in the state of Self-realization, while the term *vṛtti* means an act of cognition, whether in the form of observation or reasoning. In other words, *vṛtti jñāna* implies all forms of rational-empirical knowledge. What this means is that the term *avidyā* covers the entire domain of scientific knowledge, not ignorance. Indeed, that is the way the term is used in the discourse of Indian thought.

The views of knowledge just mentioned are important for the development of psychology in India because, as we shall see, Śaṅkara builds a comprehensive model of psychological functioning with a focus on cognition, presenting a

distinctive perspective on the nature, strengths, and also limitations on human acquisition of knowledge. Śaṅkara's followers have further developed this model to include detailed accounts of meditative techniques leading to self-realization. These developments will be discussed in due course in this book.

2.5 Relationship Between Humans and Nature

It is difficult to find a term in Sanskrit or some Indian languages that conveys the same sense as the contemporary view of nature, although the terms *prakṛti, sarga, and nisarga* come fairly close to it. Nevertheless, what matters most is how attitudes toward nature that are reflected in Indian culture have shaped psychological thought in India in ways different from those in the West. That events in nature unfold in ways that are strictly determined by cause–effect relationships is widely assumed in the Indian tradition as in the West, but there are interesting differences in views of causality that are important in the context of psychology.

When Descartes conceptually divided reality between the domains of mind and matter, the question of how the abstract, nonspatial and weightless events in the mind, such as intentions, could ever make a concrete and heavy body move in space, became a major problem. Modern psychology is stuck with this conundrum, pitting mentalist, and physicalist camps forever against each other. With the advent of behaviorism, the concepts of consciousness as well as mind were banished from psychology; and with rapid advances in the understanding of how the brain works, the idea that mind is nothing but the functioning of the brain has taken hold. Regardless of the popularity of such physicalist views, the debates over the mind–body problem continue with even greater intensity than before. It is neither necessary nor possible to enter into a discussion of the mind–body problem here.

At the first blush, the cultural differences between attitudes toward nature may not be viewed as having anything to do with psychology. However, as we shall see, such differences, deeply rooted in the very fabric of culture over centuries, have shaped psychological thought in different directions. To help understand how so, we need to take a close look at the historical development of attitudes toward nature in Western and Indian cultures.

There is difference between Indian and Western attitudes about the relations of humans toward nature. As we saw earlier, the common Upaniṣadic view of human beings was that they are integral part of the world of plants and animals, and that consciousness as an immanent principle of reality is imbued in all forms of life from the simplest to the most complex. In the West, although Aristotle saw continuity between plants, animals, and humans, the Bible gave a special place to man as God made him in His own image. Working within the Biblical tradition Francis Bacon, the father of modern science, assigned a special place to humans in relation to nature. It was implicit in his perspective that God had endowed humans with power to reason that He had not given to any animal species. For Bacon, this power was to be used to "read the book of nature," and to discover the universal laws of nature.

Following in the footsteps of Bacon, Newton believed that his task was to define the laws that God had given nature to follow. But for Bacon, knowledge of the laws of nature was to be pursued for a particular purpose: to control the forces of nature for the benefit of mankind. (Note that Bacon had denied a place for purpose in nature, not in human nature.) This implies the attitude of *dominating* nature, and for Bacon this was a mandate that God Himself had given to human kind. Having created man in His own image, God is supposed to have assured men to "let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over every living that moveth upon the earth (*Genesis*, 1.25).

Interestingly, despite the continuing conflict between science and religion in the West, the two have inadvertently collaborated in promoting not only the mastery over, but also the exploitation of nature. The mastering of nature's forces through science and technology has led to enormous benefits for humans by controlling diseases and producing food and goods in unimaginably large quantities. This is too well known to need proof. With the advent of behaviorism, the Baconian view of using the knowledge of the laws of nature was extended to psychology. Now the science of psychology could use knowledge of the universal laws of learning to exert control over animals including humans, even as knowledge of Newtonian laws were used to tame forces of nature. Skinner (1983), clearly inspired by Bacon, developed the technology of behavior modification based on the laws of learning. But in psychology, as in the natural sciences, application of scientific knowledge is a double-edged weapon. Knowledge of physics and biology has been used effectively for damming rivers and increasing food production, while at the same time it has also been used for the development of weapons of mass destruction, whether atomic, chemical, or biological. The ability to master the nature has led to ecological disasters and to the depletion of natural resources at an astounding rate. Likewise, the use of behavioral technology, too, has shown to be both beneficial as well as destructive in different situations: beneficial clinical practice as well as education on the one side, and in a diabolical form in "brain washing" of prisoners of the Korean War (Lifton 1961).

Turning now to the typical Indian attitudes to nature, we can see a significantly different situation. There are several passages in Upaniṣads like the one quoted from the *Chāndogya* earlier in this chapter that portray humans as being integral parts of nature. It is not only that the cow is considered sacred, there are several folk festivals that illustrate respect for the role animals play in human life, such as refraining from eating foods produced with the help of animals once a year, and so on. For millennia villages in India had adopted a way of life where everything useful produced from nature was fully recycled back into nature. It is true that in India too rivers were dammed indicating some ways of harnessing forces of nature, but when compared to modern Europe, domination of nature was not a specialty of the Indian culture. It is fair to say that by and large the attitude to nature displayed in the history of Indian culture is one of "man-in-nature" as opposed to "man-over-nature" (Paranjpe 2011a). Cultures are, of course, open to change; the tendency to live in symbiosis with nature manifest in the village life style has changed with increasing industrialization in India. Gandhi's attempt to revitalize the self-sufficiency of villages has not been

successful, and rapid urbanization is resulting in major changes in Indian society and culture. Indiscriminate mining and deforestation in various parts of India now reflect the same exploitative attitude toward nature as in many other parts of the world.

The inadvertent complicity of science in the exploitation of nature is consistent with the gaze of science that looks at the world "out there" rather than focusing on the inner world. It is interesting that behaviorist psychology is likewise focused outward. Thus, Skinner (1974, p. 13), following the lead of Meyer (1922), called their kind of psychology as the "psychology of the other-one." In sharp contrast with this, the focus of Indian Psychology is on the self, rather than the other, and one is encouraged to look inside rather than objects and events—animals, behavior—from the outside. Thus, the most crucial aspect of Patañjali's Yoga is looking inwards (*pratyāhāra*) and to control one's own stream of thoughts so as to discover the blissful nature of the *self*, self as a subject (*puruṣa*). Although the self continues to be a topic of study in modern psychology, the emphasis is usually on the observable aspects of one's own as of others' behavior, with little if any effort in reaching into the self at the center of awareness.

2.6 The Concept and the Doctrine of Karma

To understand how behavior is most commonly conceptualized in Indian psychology, it is necessary to clarify the use of the concept of *karman*, and the principles that are thought to govern behavior. The Sanskrit word *karman*, or simply *karma*, mainly means action, but it also conveys a set of related connotations such as physical motion or activity, work, performance, especially performance of religious acts or rites, and so on. *Karma* is traditionally characterized in terms of human activity at three levels: physical, verbal, and mental. In this sense, it covers the region of what modern psychology refers to as overt and covert as well as verbal behavior. But unlike the contemporary usage of the word behavior, especially in a behaviorist sense where it generally excludes deliberate or willed action, the conventional Indian usage of *karma* clearly implies free will. Thus, for instance, Śaṅkara defines *karma* as action that one may choose to perform, not to perform, or to perform in a different way.[2] He gives a common sense example where a person may choose to walk to go to a place, or ride a horse, or choose not to go at all. He clarifies that such freedom exists in actions that are enjoined by the Vedas (*vaidika karma*) and thus have moral implications (such as speak the truth, for instance), as well as common daily activities without moral implications (*laukika karma*, e.g., choosing to cook, cook with rice or barley, or not to cook at all). Surely the concept of *karma* presumes what is conventionally called "free will," which is particularly

[2]Śaṅkara says in his commentary on Bādarāyaṇa's *Brahma Sūtra*:

Kartum akartum anyathā vā kartum śakyam laukikam vaidikam ca karma. (Ninth century/1980, 1.1.2.2)

crucial in choosing between good or bad behavior, for without such freedom the idea of moral responsibility becomes meaningless. Note, for instance, that a man may be expected to help a lady in danger only when his hands are free to do so, but not when his hands are tied by burglars. In the Indian tradition, the usage of the term *karma* rarely implies action devoid of moral implications, as is often the case in modern psychology.

Since the time of the ancient Upaniṣads, it was assumed that good actions lead to good consequences, and bad actions lead to bad consequences. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* says, for instance, that "the doer of good becomes good. The doer of evil becomes evil. One becomes virtuous by virtuous action, bad by bad action" (4.4.5). This idea has sometimes been called the *Doctrine of Karma*. The word "doctrine" is used here to imply its dictionary meaning as a principle in a branch of knowledge that is traditionally accepted as valid and authoritative. In essence this principle is consistent with the words of the New Testament saying that "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (*Galatians* 6.7). The basic idea here implies "retributive justice," meaning that it involves dispensing appropriate punishments for all immoral actions. In Christianity it is believed that such justice is done on the Day of Judgment when God calls every dead person from the grave by name and holds him/her accountable for all good and bad actions, assigning them to heaven or hell as appropriate for eternity. In the Indian tradition, however, there is no concept of a particular day of judgment. There is rather a belief in a cosmic system where good or bad consequences of all actions naturally follow, even as causal consequences are *assumed* in natural science to inevitably follow all events according to the principle of causality. Moreover, Indian thinkers have over the ages constructed a systematic set of concepts to help understand how the system of behaviors and their consequences work, and it would be useful to provide an outline of the same.

An important concept in this context is *saṁskāra*, which suggests that each activity or action—i.e., *karma*—leaves behind a *trace*. Each trace is metaphorically thought of as a seed, which sprouts under appropriate conditions and leads to a "fruit" (*phala*), even as a coconut can under the right conditions produce a coconut tree. In terms of human experience, the idea of action bearing its "fruit" can be put somewhat differently: A student's hard work at study bears the fruit of a brilliant success and a coveted prize, and this rewarding experience prompts her to study harder for the next examination. Thus rewarded by good consequences, a person is prompted to repeat the rewarding behavior. This should explain why the Upaniṣad quoted above says that one becomes virtuous by virtuous action. Such conceptualization is similar to the behaviorist idea of "reinforcement," which suggests that behaviors that are followed by pleasant experiences tend to strengthen the propensity of that behavioral response, and the same behaviors tend to be repeated.

The traditional interpretation of *karma* in the Mīmāṁsā system is closer to a retributive justice model similar to the Christian view whereby good behaviors are thought to be rewarded by pleasures in heaven (*svarga*), and bad actions are punished by horrors in hell (*naraka*). But unlike the notions of eternal hell or eternal life in heaven typical of Christianity and Islam, a soul's sojourn in heaven and/or hell is believed to be temporary, commensurate to the amounts of accumulated

merit (*puṇya*) or demerit (*pāpa*). Rewards in heaven and punishments in hell may not exhaust all that is due for past actions, and seeds sown by past actions often take indefinite period of time before finding appropriate conditions to bear fruit. If all this were correct, then it would be logically necessary for individuals to be reborn. For even if all good and bad deeds were to be adequately rewarded and punished in heaven and hell, it would not be fair to end the soul's life once and for all, since this would mean unfairly depriving the individual of further opportunities for higher levels of spiritual progress and final liberation (*mokṣa*). The implications of the temporary nature of rewards in heaven, and the rationale for attaining a state of perpetual happiness, are clarified in the famous dialogue between the young Naciketas and Yama, the God of Death, in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*. Naciketas refused to take the offer of all the pleasures hard to attain in the world of mortals—noble maidens, chariots, and musical instruments and all—in return for a coveted 3rd boon given to him by Yama, and asked instead for what lies beyond birth and death (*Kaṭha*, 1.1.26–29). We shall return to this issue of going beyond the cycle of birth and death later on in this chapter.

One of the assumptions implied in the theory of *karma* may be called the "just world hypothesis," which suggests that the world is a place where justice will be *ultimately* done, no matter how long it takes for adequate rewards and punishments to be meted out.[3] There are a few other underlying assumptions that would help clarify and deepen the idea of a cosmic system of perfect justice implied in the doctrine of *karma*. Two such assumptions are that, *first*, without exception, *all* actions must necessarily result in appropriate consequences, good or bad (*kṛta vipraṇāśa*), and *second*, there is no undeserved reward or punishment (*akṛta abhyāgama*). Although we often find instances where saints suffer while villains get away with murder, there is a promise (or hope) that such apparent miscarriages of justice will be rectified, sooner or later. This idea is expressed in a popular saying in Hindi, which asserts that in God's world there is delay (*der*), but no darkness (*andher*)—or lack of justice.

The idea that nobody would suffer for someone else's action has an important implication of special relevance to psychology. Putatively, all *saṁskāra*s remain strictly with the individual herself without spilling onto others or dissipating away. In other words, individual is the unit, an ultimate "profit center" as it were of gain or loss, merit and demerit. This implies an "individualistic" position on the concept of person that is common in the Indian culture. This position is parallel to a kind of individualism implicitly adopted in modern psychology, whereby the human individual—a person or personality—is taken as a unit of understanding, constituting an independent field of study with a universe of discourse of its own. Such a position underwrites psychology's search for meaningful connections among an individual's behaviors across time and space. It provides the fundamental rationale whereby a psychologist expects meaningful connections between a person's

[3]There is a considerable amount of research in modern psychology about people's belief in a just world. See Montada and Lerner (1998), Dalbert (2001).

childhood experiences and behavior in later life. The same rationale provides a basis to expect significant correlations between a person's behavior across situations, thereby making behavior in principle predictable. While in modern psychology, the time span is limited to a single life cycle (usually the one that is currently in progress and is in principle observable, or a portion thereof that is described in a case study or biography), in Indian thought the time span indefinitely extends across life cycles. The idea of rebirth provides the hope that it will be possible to attain self-knowledge no matter how many life cycles it takes to finally escape from the apparently unending cycle of action and its consequences.

The idea of repeated birth and death (*punarjanma* and *punarmṛtyu*) is an integral part of the traditional world view shared by almost all schools of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain thought with the exception of the materialist followers of Cārvāka. What happens to each soul after death is, however, a matter of differences of opinion. When seen from the vantage point of the secular and scientific worldview that prevails today, the idea of rebirth would appear fanciful, and even if one is willing to take it seriously, one would like to ask for some kind of proof, empirical or rational. There are in fact cases of a person "reborn" reported in the newspapers now and then, for instance where a child starts to speak in a foreign language and narrates episodes from her "past life." Many such cases have been subject to systematic investigation and critical analysis. Stevenson (1974, 1987) at the University of Virginia collected and analyzed a large number of ostensible cases of reincarnation. While these cases suggest the possibility of reincarnation, they do not prove with any degree of certainty that reincarnation is real (Rao 2011b). Accounts of exceptional talents of the musical genius such as Mozart, or the mathematician Ramanujam, for instance, are cited as evidence for something that must have been learned in prior life. The inborn fear of death common to all animals is thought of as the result of the memory of the ending of the previous life cycle, and is considered as a rational proof for the idea of rebirth.[4]

According to Dasgupta (1922/1992), the well-known historian of Indian philosophy, "there has seldom been before or after Buddha any serious attempt to prove or disprove the doctrine of rebirth" (Vol. 1, p. 87). Potter (1964) has suggested that the Law of Karma is a fundamental principle that is taken for granted without discussion even as the principle of causality is taken for granted in the study of natural sciences. Even as events happening apparently without cause tend to be ignored in science as mere exceptions to the rule, or anomalies (Kuhn 1970), in the context of the Law of Karma, miscarriages of justice in our lifetime are considered temporary, subject to eventual correction in times to come. Looking at the Indian and Western tradition across centuries, one can see a major difference in perspectives: while in the West there is a sharp line dividing the domains of "is"

[4]This idea is suggested in Vyāsa's commentary on Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtra* (2.9). Vyāsa clarifies that evidence for the universal fear of death in all living beings cannot be obtained through direct experience or observation (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), or testimony of scriptures (*āgama*). This is an indication that evidence for idea of rebirth is considered open to discussion—although detailed discussion of the same is rare.

versus "ought," fact versus values, in the Indian tradition there is no sharp dichotomy of this kind. In modern science, there is a strong tendency to insist on value-free search for truth free from ideological encroachments on scientific research. In the Indian tradition, too, there has been a clear conception of the domain of truth beyond the good and the bad. This is expressed clearly, for instance, in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.14), where the young lad Naciketas insists on Yama that he be told of what lies beyond good and bad, beyond right and wrong.

In recent years, there has been a strong reaction against the belief in the Doctrine of Karma since historically it had been the basis on which the birth of individuals in "lower" caste families suffering from various socially imposed handicaps, including untouchability. We shall return to this issue in the next section of this chapter since the issue is inextricably connected with that of *dharma*.

2.7 The Concept of Dharma and Its Role

Dharma is one of the core concepts of the Indian tradition. *Dharma* is an important part of Indian culture and society. Monier-Williams's *Sanskrit–English Dictionary* lists the followings meanings of the term *dharma*: prescribed conduct, duty, right, justice, virtue, morality, religion, religious merit, and good work according to a right or rule, among others. In contemporary Indian languages, *dharma* often means charity as well. As can be easily seen from this list of meanings, moral considerations and duties are central to the concept of *dharma*. Although the modern usage of the word *dharma* includes ways of worshipping, these are not crucial aspects of the classical concept of *dharma*. Given the emphasis in Indian culture on ethics and the performance of one's duty, it should be easy to understand why *dharma* is one of the four major goals that all persons are expected to pursue in life along with the acquisition of wealth and power (*artha*), fulfillment of desires (*kāma*), and liberation (*mokṣa*). We shall return to a more detailed discussion of the prescription of these goals later on in this chapter. Here it will be useful to focus on the implications of the most important meaning of *dharma* as ethos, or ethical guidelines widely upheld in a society. It should be clear that social life would result in chaos in any society if a majority of people does not follow its ethos or consensually supported system of rules. As a set of rules of conduct, the concept of *dharma* is inextricably connected with that of *karma*, or willed action. To put it in terms popularized by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, *ought* implies *can*, for there is no point in asking someone should do something when it is physically impossible for her to do so.

In Jaimini's Mīmāṁsā aphorisms (1.1.2) *dharma* is defined as (Vedic) injunctions or commands to act in a specific manner. A command suggests how people *ought* to act; they imply prescriptions, rather than descriptions. Although the term *dharma* is most often used in a prescriptive sense, sometimes it is also used in combination with other terms to suggest the description of natural tendencies. For instance, *guṇa dharma* means natural property of anything, such as curative or

poisonous property of an herb, and *svabhāva dharma* implies trait-like behavioral tendencies of persons such as aggressive or talkative without necessarily implying whether it is good or bad to behave this way. In Jaimini's Mīmāṁsā system the discussion of *dharma* was focused primarily on the correct delineation of rules for sacrificial rituals (*yajña*) described in the Brāhmaṇa texts, rather than ethical principles. In the Upaniṣads, however, the term *dharma* is often used to designate practice of virtues, rather than specific rules for conducting sacrificial rituals mainly for the purpose of attaining a place in heaven. Thus, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (1.11) suggests: "Speak the truth. Practice virtue (*dharma*)… Let there be no neglect of study and teaching. Let there be no neglect of the duties to the gods and the fathers …" Here the focus is clearly on how one ought to behave in society here on earth.

According to Kaṇāda's *Vaiśeṣika-Sūtra,* the goal of *dharma* is twofold: to promote, the attainment of prosperity (*abhyudaya*) as well as the attainment of highest good (*niḥśreyasa*). It is implied that the pursuit of wealth is fine as long as it is done without violating ethical principles. In the same spirit, the *Bhagavad Gītā* (7.11) says that the Lord is reflected in the fulfillment of desires when it is not against moral guidelines. As the common saying goes, honesty is the best policy; it helps improve profits in the long term. The Upaniṣadic rules of conduct, such as speak the truth, respect your teachers and parents, and the like mentioned above are considered applicable to every one regardless of age, gender, and position in society. As such, they are called *common* rules (*sāmānya dharma*). However, when it comes to daily life, the rules of conduct need to be specific to one's station in life. Thus, while a teacher or a priest can afford to follow the rule against killing without any problem, a soldier or policeman responsible for protecting the society from alien invaders and criminals cannot avoid killing as part of their duty. So, a code of conduct that would provide rules appropriate to various categories of people is needed. This was the idea behind the development of *varṇāśrama dharma*, or a code of conduct appropriate to major occupational categories and stages in life. Here *varṇa* implies the four major occupational categories, namely the priests (*brāhmaṇa*), warriors (*kṣatriya*), traders (*vaiśya*), and laborers (*śūdra*), and the *āśrama* refers to roles appropriate to age grades, namely that of student (*brahmacarya*) in youth, the householder (*gṛhastha*) in adult life, the transitional stage of preretirement (*vānaprastha*), and lastly that of renunciation in old age (*saṅnyāsa*). We should quickly add here that the *varṇa* and *jāti* have currently become highly controversial issues, and we shall return to examine the contentious issues later on in this section. The purpose of the discussion of these concepts here is not to advocate them, but rather to help understand the aspects of psychology that are affected by the social structure of the Indian society shaped by its historical and current context.

In the history of the Indian tradition, a number of texts generically called *Smṛtis* arose to fulfill the need for developing a code of conduct applicable to each of the *varṇa* and *āśrama* categories. The specific rules in the code were normally based on the general ethical principles, such as speak the truth, which were enunciated by the Upaniṣads. Whereas the Upaniṣads were considered to be of supra-human origin (*apauruṣeya*), the *Smṛtis* were undoubtedly composed by human beings: scholars

from different regions at different times. Important among such persons are Manu, Yājñavalkya, Āpastamba, Bodhāyana, and so on.

These scholars devised specific rules in light of the general ethical principles stated in the Upaniṣads. In situations where Upaniṣadic guidelines were either not available or found inadequate, the scholars turned to the then-established practices of the region, considering the behavior of unselfish and learned persons as guide to right behavior. The *Smṛti* texts systematized and codified sets of rules of conduct to guide in a wide variety of civil matters such as property, succession, and professional conduct, as well as criminal matters such as theft and murder. For centuries, various *Smṛti* texts were used by the kings as guidelines for the operation of judicial systems in their kingdoms. When the British established their rule over the Indian subcontinent, they developed a criminal code based on Roman and British traditions, but allowed the Indian judicial system to follow the guidelines of the Smṛtis in civil matters such as succession, adoption, marriage and divorce, and so on. Muslims and Christians as well as tribal communities were also allowed to follow their respective traditions in such civil matters. Now into the second decade of the twenty-first century, whether or not India should have a common code in all civil matters is a highly controversial political issue.

Although the *varṇa* categories as described in the *Smṛtis* were supposed to exist in real life in ancient times, social practices were transformed over the centuries giving rise to a number of communities called *jāti*s (or castes in English) that were loosely grouped into the four *varṇa* categories. The reason to say "loosely" is that often there is no consensus on which *jāti* belongs to which *varṇa*; while members of many castes considered themselves as belonging to a higher *varṇa*, those in the upper castes often denied them such status. The *jāti*s were commonly associated with specific trades in the village economy such as priesthood, fishing, smithy, carpentry, pottery, and so on. *Jāti*s were endogamous communities, i.e., groups where members married within the community. Most of these groups were closely, but not exclusively, associated with particular occupations or trades. Members of such communities developed all kinds of support systems, and usually regulated their internal affairs through committees of elders called *jāti pañcāyat*s. Outside of legal matters within the jurisdiction of the kings and legal authorities appointed them, the authority of caste councils was respected. These councils ruled in various matters pertaining to alleged breach of conventional rules of conduct within specific caste communities, such as disputes over payments among members of the trading communities, or practicing a trade that members of a caste are not supposed to practice, marital and family disputes, and so on.

The caste councils were headed by respectable elders of the community. They generally followed conventions or devised new rules when needed. The councils exerted considerable influence on members of their communities by imposing fines, and by excommunicating errant members in case of more serious violations of caste conventions. This system of making and implementing rules of conduct is significantly different from that of ancient Greece, where laws were enacted by people in legislative assemblies of small democratic states, and also unlike ancient Rome where administrators laid out the rules. In some ways, the Indian system resembles

the British system where the British Common Law, or traditional practices of Britain, provides basic guidelines in legal matters. It is after gaining independence from the British colonial rule that a parliamentary system of legislation through elected officials at the local, state, and national levels became central to life in India. Although the caste councils and their influence is rapidly withering away, a few of them are still functioning, with occasional bad publicity as in the case of *khap-panchayat*s in Haryana and other regions of northern India with their dictates on who can or cannot marry whom and so on.

Throughout history, the Indian society was pluralistic; there was no insistence on a single code applicable for all; cultural and regional differences were commonly recognized and respected. Different *Smṛti* texts were followed in different regions during the same era, and new Smṛtis were formulated when historical change made old rules obsolete. Diversity in codes of conduct in different religious, ethnic, caste, and tribal communities was taken for granted. Does this mean that there were no common rules applicable to everyone on the basis of universal ethical principles? Not so. Indeed, standards equally applicable to all were well recognized. As noted earlier, these were designated as *sāmānya dharma.* The common ethical principles of the Smṛtis were similar to the basic Upaniṣadic injunctions such as speak the truth, practice virtue, respect teachers and elders, and so on. Manu (n.d./1971, 6.10) lists ten such principles of *sāmānya dharma*: contentment, forgiveness, disciplining one's mind, nonstealing, inner and outer cleanliness, controlling lust and greed, cultivating curiosity and lust for knowledge, seeking self-knowledge and insight, truthfulness, and controlling anger. The saints often summarized the essence of *dharma* in simplest guidelines and explained them in vernacular to common folk. The seventeenth century Marathi saint poet Tukārāma, for instance, explained (in poem #1027) that helping others constitutes meritorious behavior (*puṇya*), while maliciousness constitutes the opposite (*pāpa*) (see Tukārāma, seventeenth century/1973).

Varṇāśrama dharma specifies different rules for the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras. This system has become very problematic in modern times, and for good reasons. This is because the different duties for the priests, warriors, traders, and laborers became associated with differential privileges favoring the upper categories over the lower ones. For instance, while the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas were traditionally given privileges to learn the Vedas and have rituals such as weddings administered according to Vedic formulae, such privileges were denied to the Śūdras. Worse, the *Smṛtis* not only prevented the Śūdras from learning the Vedas, but also prescribed harsh penalties to Śūdras who would so much as to inadvertently over hear the chanting of the Vedic mantras. At the village level, customs were developed whereby the Brāhmaṇas were allowed to bathe in the river at the upstream portion where the waters may be cleanest, followed by the Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas, while the Śūdras had to go furthest downstream where the water was least clean. Moreover, the system of such differential treatment of *varṇa*s and *jāti*s deteriorated further when a fifth *varṇa* was added at the lowest rung, and this section was assigned occupations such as scavenging, forced to live outside the village, and was subject to the heinous practice of untouchability.

There is no historical explanation of the origin of untouchability, nor is there any basis for its justification. It is not clear if membership in a caste or a *varṇa* always and strictly depended on birth, but it has come to be so in the case of *jāti*s for centuries. Many forms of systemic discrimination historically arose along a hierarchical ranking of castes, and membership by birth put serious limits to mobility up the ladder of status hierarchy. Worst of all, persons born in "lower" castes were supposed to accept the indignities imposed by birth in a caste group as the consequence on their own bad karma in the past life and not as an injustice imposed by a bad social organization. This was the worst application of the Doctrine of Karma. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who was born in a caste, considered "untouchable" and personally experienced the heinous treatment, and by dint of his hard work became an unquestionable leader, expressed his reaction thus:

> To the Untouchables Hinduism is a veritable chamber of horrors. The sanctity and infallibility of the Vedas, Smritis and Shastras, the iron law of caste, the heartless law of karma, and the senseless law of status by birth are to Untouchables veritable instruments of torture which Hinduism has forged against the Untouchables.[5] (Ambedkar 1945/1991, p. 296)

It is due to the systemic inequities supported by Manu in the *Manu Smṛti* that "Manuism" (*manuvāda*) has become a common slur in India today. Worse still, caste-based inequities not only perpetuated despite the efforts of several Hindu reformers for centuries, but they also infected communities of Indian Muslims and Christians who did not officially believe in the caste system. Notwithstanding all such negative aspects of *varṇāśrama dharma*, it is suggested sometime that the caste groups historically provided a variety of benefits and protection to their members, and thereby provided a strong albeit problematic socioeconomic structure for the Indian society for centuries. With the introduction of a democratic system, castes became voting blocs trying to protect common interests and privileges, giving rise to a divided society based on caste politics.

A saving grace in the middle of all this is the fundamental notion that *dharma* was not meant to provide an *eternal* and unchangeable set of rules carved in stone. *Dharma* has been called everlasting (*sanātana*) simply because, as a *living* tradition, it adapts to the historically changing environment. This is particularly true about the aspect of *dharma* that Manu had focused on, namely differential privileges based on *varṇa*. Manu was very clear about the fact that the essence of *dharma* is the actual social practice, and that social practices demand continual redefinition in changing historical circumstances. Indeed, it is recognized in the Indian culture from ancient times that each new historical era (*yuga*) deserves a new ethos (*yuga dharma*) appropriate for its unique conditions. It is also believed that a new scholar emerges at the dawn of a new era to help put together a new code of conduct. The process of change has been called *dharma-cakra-pravatana*, or turning of the wheel of *dharma*, and is symbolically represented in the wheel carved into the capstone of a pillar erected by Emperor Aśoka in the third century B.C.E. Indeed, rather than remaining

[5]The words quoted here are from Dr. Ambedkar's work called "What Congress and Gandhi have done to the untouchables?", which was first published in 1945.

a proper name of a particular person, "Manu" has become a generic term designating a scholar who prepares a code of conduct at the beginning of a new age, and tradition avers that there have been as many *Manu*s as distinct historical *era*s (*yuga*s).

Against this background, the Constitution of India adopted in 1950 represents a new code for the latest—postcolonial—era of the history of the Indian subcontinent. The most significant change heralding this new age is the abolition of untouchability by law. It is a sweet irony that the chief architect of the change was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who like his countless ancestors had suffered from the indignities of untouchability. Given that the legitimate anger of Dr. Ambedkar and his followers was sometimes expressed in the form of burning copies of the *Manu Smṛti*, it is even more ironic that he has been sometimes called the latest Manu, as the word Manu has become a generic term meaning a law giver. At any rate, since independence, a variety of special privileges have been offered to the under-privileged castes to offset the losses suffered by them over the centuries. Hopefully, the various forms of "reverse discrimination" will ensure success to the grand experiment in social engineering aimed at bringing about a thoroughly equalitarian society in India.

2.8 Implications of Dharma and Karma for Psychology

Both *dharma* and *karma* are foundational concepts of the traditional Indian worldview. They permeate the conceptual systems of almost all schools of Indian thought. Traditional psychological thinking is an integral part of these systems, and as such they are deeply influenced by notions of *dharma* and *karma*. It should be clear that *dharma* is particularly relevant for the study of society and social psychology in India. The role of castes, a product of *varṇāśrama dharma*, is too prominent a part of society and politics in India to be ignored by social psychologists today. While this issue has been a core topic for anthropologists, sociologists, and political scientists, it is arguable whether social psychologists in India have given it the attention it deserves. On the other hand, *dharma* as the basic source of the evolving ethos of the Indian society for millennia, its impact on the day-to-day behavior of countless citizens of India is less visible than caste politics, prayers in temples and homes, various religious festivals and other overt manifestations.

It is possible that the thrust of the mainstream of contemporary psychology for universal laws fashioned after Newtonian laws has led to ignoring the impact of culture and religion in shaping human behavior. The natural laws such as those of physics and chemistry do govern behavior; the electrical currents and magnetic fields in the brain continue to function exactly as dictated by the laws of electromagnetism. However, such laws are not adequate enough to account for human behavior to the fullest extent as logical positivists and some behaviorists have often suggested. The search for timeless and universal laws seems to result in ignoring the fact that history and local customs have considerable influence on behavior. As Albert Einstein once pithily quipped, the laws of gravity cannot explain why people fall in love! It is not because of some natural laws that a great majority of drivers in

some countries drive on the right side of the road and on the left in other countries, but because human behavior is rule-governed as well as governed by laws of nature —without violating the latter. As formally argued by Harré and Secord (1982), it is necessary to consider rule-governed behavior in addition to natural laws to fully account for human behavior. Although humans are free to break human-made social regulations, unlike natural laws that they cannot break, the society is together and does not fall apart because a majority follows the regulations. To the extent that *dharma* continues to provide guidelines for behavior, it must remain a suitable topic of psychological studies.

A few words may be added here to explain the relevance of the historical account of the social structure of the Indian society in a book on psychology. Modern psychology, in its enthusiasm to model itself after the natural sciences, especially physics, viewed its task to formulate the eternal and universal laws that determine behavior. As well, a sharp line was drawn between the natural sciences that depended on experimentation and replication on the one hand, and the humanities that depended on the interpretation of historical trends or the meanings of texts. History, it was thought, did not matter for the "science" of psychology. Without going into the recent developments in the philosophy of science that point out the relevance of interpretation not only for the human sciences but also for the natural sciences (Kuhn 1977; Taylor 1980), it may be noted simply that it makes no sense to ignore the role of history of *dharma* and the caste system for psychology in India. While the history of slavery in the West can help understand the intergroup relations between Caucasians and Afro-Americans in USA, generalizations from studies of the American situation may not be equally applicable to inter-caste relations in India.

Given the insidious effect of the *jāti*-based social organization, nobody in the right mind would in these days and age think of going back to *varṇāśrama;* social reformers who tried that have been duly ignored. The only relevance of it today is to recognize the relevance of ethical guidelines having to be different for those who play radically different roles in society. Imagine soldiers behaving like priests, and vice versa and think of the consequences. It is sometimes suggested that the degeneration of *dharma* during the period of the *Mahābhārata* was the result of Droṇa, a Brahmin, had taken to arms like a Kṣatriya, while Vidura, born in a Kṣatriya clan had given up arms and taken to learning like a Brahmin. It is interesting to note in this context that in the *Mahābhārata* (*Śānti Parva*, 109.11) the term *dharma* is discussed in its etymological sense tracing to its root verb *dhṛ*, which means to hold, sustain, or preserve. Thus, it suggests, *dharma* is that which holds a society together. There is a common expression in Sanskrit, which says that when *dharma* is protected, it protects the society. What this means is that social cohesion is ensured when people follow the ethos of the society and play their roles according to rules of the game. If this is correct, then it makes sense for psychologists to study the conditions that facilitate or hinder rule-following behavior, rather than ignoring moral behavior in the name of value-free science. Indian psychology is admittedly and unabashedly value-driven, even though, as noted before, the sphere of truth beyond good and bad, *dharma* and *adharma*, was well recognized in the ancient *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*.

A blind following of the Western models tends to lead psychologists to refrain from anything related to religion, and the idea of the relevance of *dharma* for Indian psychology would be good enough to cause suspicion for some, if not outright rejection. The above discussion of *dharma* should make it clear that *dharma* is not based on any belief system, or the putative authenticity of a historical founder claimed to be a messenger of God. Nor did it lead to the establishment of an institutional structure to safeguard a belief system by banishing or otherwise punishing scientists or thinkers who propose ideas opposed to some foundational beliefs. The misperception of *dharma* as a "religion" courts the danger of being perceived as inimical to science and free inquiry, which it cannot be.

The concepts of *karma* and *dharma* are inextricably intertwined since the practice of *dharma*, which means following ethical guidelines, is not possible unless *karma*, meaning choosing to behave in accordance with those guidelines, is also possible. *Dharma*, as a matter of right action in all walks of life, is equally connected with the other major goals of life envisioned in the Indian way of life, namely, the pursuit of wealth (*artha*), pleasure (*kāma*), and final liberation (*mokṣa*). The connection between *karma* and *mokṣa* is critical as well as intricate. This is because *mokṣa* is commonly thought of liberating oneself from the perpetual chain of *karma* and its consequences. As we shall see, the concepts of *karma* and the *kārmic cycle* have been applied to help make sense of human suffering, and to develop ways to overcome such suffering once and for all. Amelioration of suffering is clearly an issue relevant for clinical psychology, and as such the issue warrants some discussion here.

2.9 Ubiquitous Suffering: The Existential Anguish

That humans strive to minimize suffering and maximize happiness is a truism, and psychology is not an exception to the same striving. To that end, different systems of psychology have developed an understanding about the nature and causes of both suffering and happiness. In some systems of psychology such views are explicit, in others implicit, and these are often embedded in the cultural context of the psychologists who develop theories and applications. For instance, in *Civilization and its discontents* Freud (1930/1961) viewed anxiety as the problem most commonly affecting the entire civilization, and traced its origin in the repression of pleasure seeking impulses under the influence of religious doctrines and practices. In contrast, the behaviorists often implied that maladaptation to the environment was the common cause of difficulties in life and devised techniques of behavior modification to help individuals in getting over such difficulties. Human suffering is a matter of considerable discussion in the history of Indian thought.

A systematic analysis of the nature of suffering is found in the Sāṁkhya system. In his commentary on the *Sāṁkhya Kārikā* (stanza #1) Vācaspati Miśra (n.d./1985, pp. 12–17) first makes a distinction between suffering arising from external and

internal sources. The external sources are said to be of three kinds: (i) suffering arising from physical causes (*ādhibhautikam*) such as falling objects or menacing animals, which can be dispelled by physical means, such as moving away from a falling rock or by counter attack on a charging animal; (ii) suffering arising from mysterious agents (*ādhidaivikam*) such as ghosts or evil spirits, which may be dispelled by wearing amulets or chanting mantras; and (iii) suffering arising from within oneself (*adhyātmikam*). The third kind of suffering is further subdivided into two types: (a) suffering resulting from the body (*śārīra*) such as pain arising from the imbalance of bodily humors, which can be treated by medication, and (b) suffering arising from mental causes (*mānasa*), which implies mental tension (*santāpa*), and other emotional problems which demand what we now call psychotherapy. In Sāṁkhya-Yoga and the Advaita traditions, the main remedy suggested for overcoming suffering arising from mental causes is to dispel *avidyā* and remove misconstrued notions of the self.

Reflecting on the Sāṁkhya approach just described we may note, *first*, that there is an attempt here to develop a systematic approach to understanding the nature and types of suffering, and *second*, there is a focus on psychological causes of suffering to be addressed by psychological means. Indeed, in the literature on Yoga as well as the Advaita, there are explicit statements where their enterprise is viewed as being similar or analogical to that of medicine. Suffering is thought of as the disease, and methods of meditation and other practices are thought of as a form of therapy.[6] The domain of psychological intervention is clearly delineated from that of the physical domain and the field of medicine, which in its traditional form was the system of Āyurveda. That the physical aspect of yoga, involving mainly postures and breathing exercises, are means to enhance health and fitness is widely recognized. That the physical aspect is primarily a preparation for the crucial part of controlling the mind is often lost sight of. Patañjali's yoga is in fact a form of psychotherapy. It is not an accident that various forms of meditation, Yogic or Buddhist, are slowly becoming part of the clinicians' tool kit in various places around the world; it indicates that psychologists have gradually started to recognize the psychotherapeutic value of such techniques.

Many of the systems of psychology and psychotherapy that developed within the Indian tradition share a fairly common view of the nature of suffering and its

[6]In his commentary on the *Yoga Sūtra* (2.16), Vyāsa uses a medical analogy suggesting that the painful passage through life is the disease, the collusion of *puruṣa* with *prakṛti* is the cause of the disease, and wise discrimination between the two is the remedy. For an English translation of Patañjali's Yoga Sutras and the commentaries of Vyāsa and Vācaspati Miśra, see Prasada (1912).

Similarly, in In the first stanza of the 19th chapter of the verse section of his *Upadeśasāhasrī,* Śaṅkara (ninth century/1973) uses the following words alluding to a medical metaphor:

tṛṣṇā jvara nāśakāraṇaṁ cikitsitaṁ jñāna vairagya bheṣajam|

Here desire is compared with fever, and knowledge and the cultivation of dispassionateness are thought of as a medicine. For an English translation of *Upadeśasāhasrī,* see Potter (1981, pp. 217–254).

underlying causes. In the long and rich history of Indian culture, there is a persistent theme that considers the insatiable nature of desires as the primary cause of human suffering. A story of a king from the first chapter of epic Mahābhārata illustrates the point. King Yayāti lost his youth due to a curse, and became despondent for being unable to enjoy sex and other pleasures of life anymore. So he asked his sons to lend him their youth so that he could continue enjoying sensual pleasures. While the first four sons refused, the fifth and youngest son agreed. With borrowed youth, Yayāti enjoyed sensual pleasures in the company of his two wives and a heavenly damsel "for a 1000 years." But in the end he still remained unsatisfied. The central idea of the story of Yayāti is beautifully expressed in words attributed to him in a single short stanza of *Ādiparva* (75.50), a section of the epic Mahābhārata. It may be paraphrased in English as follows: "Human desires can never be completely sated by means of objects of pleasure; instead they get stronger like fire flared by fuel."[7] The same idea is repeated in the same words in the *Manu Smṛti* (2.94), an influential code of Hindu ethics (see Manu, n.d./1971, p. 47). While this instance may be viewed as an old Hindu "myth," the well-known episode in the life history of Siddhartha Gautama, the prince of a kingdom in Nepal, echoes a similar theme. All the pleasures he was able to enjoy as a young and married prince could not make him happy; the sight of a sick man, an old man, and a dead man convinced him that worldly pleasures are transitory; on balance suffering exceeds pleasures. As is well known, Siddhartha went on to find ways to solve this problem, and spent the rest of his life learning and teaching how to eradicate suffering.

There is a popular saying in Sanskrit which suggests that one who owns ten houses yearns for a hundred, and the owner of a hundred wants to own a thousand and so on. In current times, we find that a winner of eight Olympic gold medals sets a record exceeding all previous athletes, but wants to set up a still higher record. The Forbes' list of billionaires around the world keeps getting longer, but one rarely hears about any of them not wanting more. A multibillionaire like Howard Hughes, who could command all kind of pleasures he would desire ends up with fears of death from infecting microbes and becomes miserable in his old age. Should all this seem to express an unwarranted form of pessimism, or a "sour grapes" attitude, then we may turn to modern psychology where similar ideas can be found. As James (1890/1983, p. 296) suggested through an equation:

$$\text{Self-esteem} = \text{Success} \div \text{Pretensions}.$$

What this means, in other words, is that how good or happy one feels depends not only on the degree of our success or accomplishments, but also on the degree to which they fulfill our expectations. While there always are limits on how much we can achieve in life, there are no limits on how much we can *expect* to achieve. In

[7]The words of the oft quoted stanza are:

na jātu kāmaḥ kāmānāmupabhogena śāmyati, haviṣā krṣṇavartmeva bhūya evābhivardhate. (Mahābhārata, Ādiparva, 75.50).

more recent times, the concept of *relative deprivation* (Runciman 1966) suggests the same idea: one feels deprived and unhappy insofar as one's expectations remain unfulfilled. Not having something that the Jones's next door have is enough to make a neighbor feel miserable, and the grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence as the saying goes!

Some important and distinctive aspects of the Indian perspectives on suffering presented above may be noted here: *First*, there is a holistic view of enjoyment and suffering in life; it is the balance of one or the other through the entire life cycle that is a matter of concern more than particular sources of suffering, or forms of pathology. *Second*, the search for answers is directed inward more than outward; the focus is on the nature of the one who enjoys or suffers rather than on external afflictions or stressors. *Third*, there is an attempt to reach to the root of the problem and try for a radical removal of suffering. The main idea is that a proper understanding of *the one who suffers* or enjoys would strike at the root of the problem; cutting off a tree at the trunk would make it unnecessary to take down the branches one by one. Whether or not such an attempt is successful is a relevant question to ask, but this requires a detailed understanding of the various means that have been developed, tried, and tested in the lives of many persons across the generations. Such an examination, however worthwhile, is beyond the scope of this book. It would be useful to first see what the views of suffering and its amelioration are as well as those of the highest possible happiness and how it could be attained. These issues are examined elsewhere in this book.

It should be clear that the focus of Indian psychology has been on self-knowledge; it is existential issues such as "who am I" or "why am I here?" that are seen as fundamental issues deserving our attention. This requires looking inward to the core of one's selfhood. Such is not the central issue in modern psychology, although it is surely not ignored in the history of Western thought. Indeed, modern psychology began with interest in the nature of selfhood as William James's long and insightful chapter in his *Principles* (1890/1983) indicates. However, most of the development of studies of the self in modern psychology have focused on what James called the self-as-object, aspects of selfhood that require "looking out" rather than turn inward as most Indian approach to self-knowledge require. The clear contrast between traditional Indian and modern Western psychologies may be attributed to the fact that major developments in the former happened primarily in the context of a spiritual quest, while in the latter case the psychologists' close alliance with the profession of medicine with a focus on various forms of pathology. But the contrast implies more of complementarity than of conflict in their contributions to psychology on the global scale.

2.10 The Human Quest

While systematic attempts to understand the nature and causes of suffering is one side of the quest, the other side involves the setting up goals worth pursuing in life, including the attainment of the highest possible level of happiness. The latter

pursuit, like the former, may be viewed in the broad historical context of culture to help identify the major themes of culture and their influence on the pursuit of psychological knowledge. Coan (1977) has shown how various systems of psychology around the globe have been influenced by views of psychological well-being such as mental health, normality, maturity, self-actualization, and human fulfillment. After surveying varied models reflected in the classical literature on this issue from around the world, Coan suggests that the ideals pursued belong to four types of personalities, namely a hero, artist, sage, or saint. To put it in other words, the more common ideals involve the successful pursuit of wealth and power like a hero, creativity in the field of art like Michelangelo, stellar contribution to knowledge like Plato or Einstein, or simple life and compassionate behavior like the many saints of the world. With this interesting analysis in mind, we may examine the ideals that have guided the pursuit of psychology in the Indian tradition.

As noted earlier, *mokṣa* is one of the four major goals that all persons are expected to pursue in life along with the performance of one's duties (*dharma*), the acquisition of wealth and power (*artha*), and fulfillment of desires (*kāma*). These goals are called *puruṣārtha*s, and they are intricately intertwined with the common pattern of passage in life construed in terms of four stages of the life cycle (called *āśrama*s). During the *first* stage called *brhamacarya* spanning childhood and early youth during which one learns the rudiments of culture including the society's ethos (*dharma*). The moral principles imbibed from early childhood are to be translated into action throughout life. The *second* stage called *gṛhastha* involves married life during early and middle adulthood in which one is to devote fully to earn wealth (*artha*) and fulfill one's natural desires including sexuality (*kāma*). During the *third* stage of *vānaprsatha*, which is a period of preretirement, one is expected to gradually withdraw from active life in society. And in the *fourth* and final stage of life called *saṅnyāsa* a person is supposed to retire from family and work-a-day world, and be devoted full time to the pursuit of liberation (*mokṣa*).

It should be clear that this is an ideal pattern of life to help accommodate the pursuit of the major goals prescribed for everybody. It is more of a prescription of what life should be like, rather than a description of what commonly happens. Exceptions were made for the precocious individuals such as Śaṅkara who crave more for their spiritual uplift than pleasures of life, and were allowed to skip the pursuit of wealth and the fulfillment of desires and enter the stage of *saṅnyāsa* whenever they are ready for it. Aside from such exceptional cases, the pursuit of wealth and sexual and other pleasures are allowed for all. It should be clear that this model does not imply a kill-joy perspective on life. Asceticism is not recommended (nor possible or desired) for everybody. This is contrary to the misperception that Indian culture promotes turning away from seeking wealth and getting socially involved. It may be noted that the worship of Laskṣmī, the goddess of wealth, is an integral and popular aspect of Hinduism. In Indian culture, like in most others, the ideals are not fully followed, and in modern times the pursuit of *artha* and *kāma* has dominated, with the pursuit of *dharma* and *mokṣa* taking a back seat. This is particularly true with increasing globalization with accompanying proliferation of a consumerist culture around the world.

The promotion of the four major goals of life has led the Indian intelligentsia in the past to produce major works devoted to their pursuit. Thus, Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* (see Kauṭilya 1992) and Vātsyāyana's *Kāma Sūtra* (1992) are classical works devoted, respectively, to the study of political economy and sexology. Jaimini begins his Mīmaṁsā aphorisms declaring "let us now begin to explore the nature of *dharma*" (*athāto dharma jijñāsā*), devoting the rest of his treatise to specify the rules of conduct expressed in the injunctions of the Vedas. There is long and rich tradition of works devoted to the study of *dharma* (Kane 1930–1977). As to the pursuit of *mokṣa*, there is a still richer and more diverse approaches described in numerous works belonging to several spiritual paths. This is the predominant topic of the Upaniṣads, and they inspired many approaches to reach the same goal. One of the most prominent among such approaches is described in Bādarāyaṇa's *Brahma Sūtra.* It involves a critical examination of the Upaniṣadic texts in an attempt to find out what *Brahman*, the ultimate reality. Given that Brahman is thought to be identical with the Ātman, this work is essentially a treatise on the nature of the Self. Following the lead of the Upaniṣads and their interpretation by Bādarāyaṇa, the system of Vedānta develops in detail the methodology for the attainment of *mokṣa* by way of self-realization. Interestingly, Gautam Buddha, who strongly rejected the major tenets of the Upaniṣads, nevertheless proposed the pursuit of *nirvāṇa*, a goal that strangely seems to take an adept to results that look highly similar to those pursuing *mokṣa*.

Mokṣa is one of the most prominent terms in the history of Indian thought and culture; it indicates a very popular conception of an ideal that many people aspire for. *Mokṣa* and its linguistic variation *mukti* are part of a set of terms including *apavarga, niḥśreyasa, kaivalya*, and *nirvāṇa,* all of which designate variations of views concerning the highest possible state to strive for. Ensconced in various schools of thought and their many subdivisions, the terms convey nuances arising from the doctrinal differences among the schools, and indicate the outcome of varied practices for self-transformation. These practices have been developed in multiple chains of dedicated teachers and students over the millennia. Various techniques developed by the different schools of thought are an integral and important part of the applied aspect of Indian psychology. Here it would be useful to clarify certain important commonalities as well as differences in the views of the ideal human condition conveyed by these terms.

It is best to note first of all that underlying all the variations in the views of the ideal human condition is the distinction between what is pleasurable (*preyas*) as distinguished from what is essentially good (*śreyas*). This distinction is clearly made in the dialogue between the young Naciketas and Yama, the god of death, in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.1–3) where Yama appreciates that the boy was able to make this crucial distinction in asking for something more worthwhile than a 1000 years of luxurious life of a ruler on earth. In this context, the term *niḥśreyasa* indicates the highest possible good, and this connotation is implied in the rest of the terms in this class. Of the many different schools of Indian thought, the materialist followers of Cārvāka school seem to ignore the issue of what is "good," and stick to the search for carnal pleasures. Their view is comparable to what is called

hedonism, which holds that pleasure is the ultimate good. A similar idea is expressed in Freud's writings where he says "… sexual love… has given us our most intense experience of an overwhelming sensation of pleasure and has thus furnished us with a pattern of our search for happiness" (Freud 1930/1961, p. 82). In such views, we find an echo of the tradition of Cārvāka which continues till this date. Cārvāka school founded by Bṛhaspati, is said to have advocated that we should make the most of life on earth by seeking pleasures, for there is no life after death. In sharp contrast to this view, most other schools of Indian thought, including those aligned with Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism believe in the idea of rebirth.

The idea of *mokṣa* is inextricable from the Doctrine of Karma, since the basic meaning of this term is liberation, and it implies getting oneself free from the perpetual cycle of action and its consequences. There are many assumptions embedded in this doctrine that explain why we are all thought to have been trapped in an unending cycle, and why is that cycle so fearful as to lead many great minds across centuries search for an escape from it. To put this in perspective, let us note that the perpetuation of the *kārmic* cycle is no different from the idea embedded in the world view of science where every cause necessarily and always leads to an appropriate consequence, and that the causal chain is thought to be perpetual. But there is a basic difference in views of causality as interpreted in science and in the Doctrine of Karma. According to the Doctrine of Karma, intentions that guide behaviors are presumed to have causal consequence, whereas in the world view of science the causal efficacy of intentions is denied. It is common in most Indian perspectives to view that desires, especially pleasure-seeking desires, prompt behaviors in pursuit of the objects of pleasure, which is similar to what is presumed in psychoanalysis and even in early behaviorism where desires were implied in the concept of drives. The main difference between such modern perspectives in psychology and Indian perspectives which uphold the Doctrine of Karma is the idea that desires never get fully satisfied and that their pursuit results in a balance of suffering over happiness. Given this commonality of assumptions, the differences in perspectives on *mokṣa* and related concepts among the many schools of Indian thought are based on a set of factors: their differing views of reality (metaphysical doctrines), the difference in relative emphasis on cognition, emotion, and volition. Such differences are reflected in the three main paths to liberation among the Hindus, *namely jñāna-, bhakti-*, and *karma mārga*s, or pathways to *mokṣa*. The different techniques they have developed, and the lives shaped by their successful practice are illustrated in three exemplary life histories in Chap. 9 of this volume.

A closer look at the broad range of schools of thought and their spiritual practices would indicate that in fact there is an exception to the otherwise commonality of the yearning for *mokṣa*. It is common among the followers of the *bhakti mārga*, or the path of devotion, where the devotees would rather be reborn than seek escape from the *kārmic* chain and rebirth. This is because, *first*, their metaphysical doctrine denies strict monism—as in the case of Rāmānuja and Madhva—*presuming* a fundamental and inexorable difference between the devotee and the deity, and *second*, because many prominent devotees or saints find their immersion in Celestial Love (*preman*) so engaging that they would rather be reborn and keep

enjoying that ecstasy. (We will revisit this issue in Chap. 9 when we examine the life of Tukārāma, one of the greatest devotees of all times.)

The followers of Sāṁkhya and Yoga also reject monism and are committed to the dualism of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. The term *kaivalya*, which is used in common by the followers of both Sāṁkhya and Yoga schools literally means the state of complete *isolation* of *puruṣa*, the real and unchanging *self*, from its entanglement with the continually changing body and varied selves or social roles. Since the entire domain of *prakṛti*, which means the phenomenal world of ordinary experience, is thought to be continually changing, complete isolation from it implies getting exempted from the perpetual chain of karma and its consequences, and thus from the possibility of being reborn. According to the *Sāṁkhya Kārikā* (see Īśvarakṛṣṇa 1940, stanza #44), the main means for turning away from the phenomenal world is knowledge (in the sense of *vidyā*, mentioned above), which is attained in the highest state of *samādhi*.

In the Advaita system, *vidyā* is gained through a specific kind of meditation, mainly involving the wise discrimination between what is changing and what is permanent, and hence its approach is called the path of knowledge (*jñāna mārga*). While staying within the conceptual framework of the Sāṁkhya system, Patañjali's yoga has devised a different and more elaborate strategy to help attain the same goal of *kaivalya*. The core of the strategy involves withdrawing one's attention first into the mind and further inward through the layers of meanings that becloud the contentless pure consciousness, the *puruṣa*. Thus, when attention is withdrawn totally into the centre of awareness, and is made to persistently *stay* (*avasthānam*) there, a yogin becomes an uninvolved witness unaffected by the emotional ups and downs in the course of daily life. That implies escape from suffering implied in the concept of *kaivalya*.

The above account of yogic meditation as a withdrawal of attention should clarify why *kaivalya* is often considered synonymous with *apavarga*, since the term *apavarga* is derived from the root verb *vṛi* which means to turn, and the prefix *apa* meaning away from. In other words, it means turning off from, or side-stepping, the perpetual chain of action and its consequences. The technique developed in Patañjali's yoga involves much more than withdrawing attention from the outer world; it includes mainly the cultivation of dispassionate attitude to life (*vairāgya*) and repeated and tireless effort (*abhyāsa*). In addition, it includes the disciplining conduct by following ethical guidelines, cultivating concentration of mind and so on.

All such practices are considered useful by most schools of Vedānta, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and so on, regardless of their differences in their views of what exactly constitutes the highest state. For instance, the basic Sāṁkhya-Yoga texts by Īśvarakṛṣṇa and Patañjali, respectively, say little if anything of the positive or blissful nature of the state of *kaivalya*. Although many AdvaitaVedāntists often use the word *kaivalya* as a synonym of *mokṣa*, their account of the experience commonly emphasizes the extremely positive nature of highest level of experience one can attain by escaping the perpetuating chain of karma and its consequences. Indeed, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.8) estimates the Bliss of Brahman/Ātman to be

100 quintillion times higher than what a young, well-endowed human being can enjoy. Whether or not such an account is simply an exaggeration or a hyperbole, it clearly emphasizes the positive character of the ideal condition thought to be humanly attainable.

There are serious differences in the opinions of various schools of thought as to whether the highest possible state involves unimaginable bliss, or if it simply means the cessation of suffering. In the Mīmāṁsā system, for instance, *apavarga* is defined as the total absence of suffering (*ātyantikī duḥkhanivṛttiḥ*), and in fact in the Nyāya Sūtra (4.1.63) it is compared with the absence of misery in deep sleep (see Gotama 1913, p. 124). According to Jainism, however, the state of *mokṣa* involves not only an emancipation from the chain of karma and its consequences and a complete relief from suffering, but also the attainment of infinite knowledge (*anantajñāna*) and infinite perception (*anantadarśana*) (Dasgupta 1922/1975, Vol. 1, p. 207).

The term *nirvāṇa*, which is most commonly used in Buddhism, is sometimes used by Hindu thinkers also as a synonym for *mokṣa*. The term literally means blowing out, as in the case of extinguishing a flame. In Buddha's view, nothing remains the same in human life, and despite the momentary nature of events that follow one another, there is supposed to be continuity in life in the same way that a flame has a continuing existence. What feeds the flame of life is human desire; and the idea of the insatiable nature of desires is implied therein. Once the desires are tamed, the chase after pleasures must end even as a flame extinguishes after the depletion of oil in the lamp. Taming desires is not an easy enterprise, and devising effective ways to do so is the challenge that Buddha and many of his followers have taken up—and an account of the same is an important chapter of applied psychology in the Buddhist tradition. There is a great variety of techniques developed within the Buddhist tradition, and all of those are supported by matching theoretical frameworks. *Nirvāṇa* is a common term, but the accounts are too varied and complex to explain as the vast literature on the topic shows. Part of the difficulty in describing the state of *nirvāṇa* is that it is essentially indescribable. Buddha often kept silence when asked questions to which there were no simple answers; he chose instead to stick to practical problems that ordinary men and women could understand and deal with. The literature on the topic indicates that there were significant differences in the accounts of the state of *nirvāṇa;* it has been suggested that some schools portrayed the state as simply the absence of suffering, while others, especially those coming from the Mādhyamika tradition presented it as a positive quality of experience.

Before ending this section on the ideals such as *mokṣa* and *nirvāṇa* that guided the development of psychology in India more specifically of the applied side, it would be useful to make some observations in the context of modern psychology. It should be clear that a significant aspect of the historical development of modern psychology was its close association with medical practice. Freud, in particular, was most influential in the development of psychoanalysis as a method of treatment for hysteria, anxiety, and other such disorders, and indeed he and his followers

significantly influenced the development and teaching of modern psychiatry. From then on, till today modern psychology in its clinical applications is focused more on specific forms of pathology and their treatment. The continuing editions of the widely used Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) illustrate the point. By comparison, in the mainstream of modern psychology, there is less attention paid to the improvement of the condition of "normal" individuals taking them to higher levels of fulfillment. In recognition of this putative deficiency, a branch of psychology called "positive" psychology has started to develop in more recent years (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000; Lopez and Snyder 2011). The increasing popularity of techniques of meditation, particularly *Vipaśyanā*, among clinical psychologists in the US, indicates that Indian contributions to this field are already making inroads in the field of positive psychology. This issue is discussed at some length in Chap. 7 of this volume.

The fact that the ideal condition is described in highly varied ways—ranging from ordinary and humdrum deep sleep to be a zillion times better than the best of lifelong sensual pleasures—creates a problem. Such disparity in its accounts cannot be ascribed simply to the transcognitive and, therefore, consider them essentially indescribable extraordinary states of consciousness. It is possible that despite the use of common words such as *kaivalya* or *nirvāṇa* used by followers of different schools, the actual experience of the state and the pathways that help to attain it may be significantly different. Of course, nobody can have direct access to anyone else's experience, whether it pertains to extraordinary states such as *samādhi*, or ordinary experiences such as the taste of salt or pain of a pin prick. Nevertheless, if such different experiences are compared by the same person who has them, her testimony would provide some credence to the comparative value of the varied experiences. An important consideration here is that, since the variously described experiences are said to be attainable as the result of practices that are clearly laid out, their attainment is in principle attainable by a serious inquirer ready to perform all the prescribed practices. Indeed, that was the strategy adopted by Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa (1836–1886), who personally followed the arduous practices of AdvaitaVedānta, Sufism, and some other systems under the tutelage of masters in the respective fields. Needless to say, such a strategy is not within reach for a vast majority of people including the most serious and capable aspirants.

As an alternative to such first-person approach to the assessment of validity and relative value of the highest state described by various spiritual paths, we may consider an assessment of their value by examining the conduct of persons who have putatively reached the highest state. Unlike their private experiences, the behavior of such persons is publicly observable. Indeed, highly acclaimed persons from various spiritual paths tend to become widely known, often attract followers, become objects of biographies, and commonly become targets of critical assessment. We shall describe some such persons in Chap. 9 in this book. Presently, we may examine some traditional accounts of the characteristics of self-realized persons described in classical sources.

2.11 Self-realization

The *Bhagavad Gītā* is a widely available text that describes (in Chap. 2, stanzas 54–72) how a person who has settled in the highest stage of *samādhi* (*samādhistha*) "walks and talks." The main characteristic of such a person is described as "being firmly founded in wisdom" (*shtitaprajña*). Second, such a person must have given up all worldly desires, and found a profound source of satisfaction in the depth of her own inner self. Such a person remains unruffled in the midst of situation that would normally cause despair or elation in ordinary persons. Being desireless would make a person fearless and also indifferent to alluring prospects. It is so because one who is not expecting to defeat a revenge-seeking enemy need not be afraid of a possible strike, and one would not care less about windfall profits in a bull market if one is happy with simple living without lots of luxurious possessions. Such a person need not make friends in high places or ingratiate with them, nor need to hate anybody. The key to attaining such a state of equanimity, it is suggested, is to withdraw attention inward, rather than focus on objects of pleasure and make emotional investment in them. For, if one becomes seriously interested in objects of pleasure, one can become obsessed with the idea of possessing them; and an obsessed mind loses a sense of proportion, can get frustrated, and frustration leads to anger opening the door for ruin. By contrast, a person who keeps her pleasure seeking senses under firm reign can afford to take normal ups and downs in life in her stride and maintain peace and calm. Such a person does not feel excessive pride and completely rids herself of a narrow sense of ego and egotism. Overcoming the boundaries of a narrow ego implies the dawning of selflessness and manifesting limitlessly compassionate behavior (altruism). The *Bhagavad Gītā* (in Chap. 12, stanzas 13–19) gives a very similar description of the behavior of saints who may have become totally immersed themselves in celestial love of the divine, suggesting that there are various ways that may lead to such an ideal state of living.

Here one may ask, is this simply an imaginary account of a possible case, or is it manifest in the real life of any persons? The answer lies in the life histories of saints in various traditions around the world. At the dawn of modern psychology one of its founders, William James, recognized the importance of saintliness, and noted the following characteristics of saintliness recognized in the Western tradition:

> A feeling of being in wider life than that of this world's selfish little interests… An immense elation and freedom, as the outlines of the conflicting selfhood melt down… [T]he saint finds positive pleasure in sacrifice and asceticism… The sense of enlargement of life may be so uplifting that personal motives and ambitions, commonly omnipotent, become too insignificant for notice… Fears and anxieties go, and blissful equanimity takes their place. (James 1901–1902/1958, pp. 216–217)

The parallel between the *sthitaprajña* described in the *Bhagavad Gītā* and James's account of saintliness should be clear. Such a state is not restricted to a culture or a tradition; it seems to result from so many different ways to spiritual uplift resulting in overcoming of narrow ego and manifesting compassionate

behavior. In explaining the nature of *nirvāṇa*, the well-known Buddhist scholar La Vallée Poussin (1917), for instance, says that to attain *nirvāṇa* "is to become a Saint, an Arhat, free from sorrow, hope, and fear" (p. 139). To realize the truth of the Buddhist doctrine of no-self would mean losing one's ego, but despite all the doctrinal differences between Buddhism and the Advaita, the latter's goal of merging *ātman* in the *paramātman* would *also* mean losing one's ego. In either case, the result of the long march to the highest goal appears to be the manifestation of saintliness in behavior.

After describing the manifestations of the behavior in the lives of several saints, James (1901–1902/1958) goes on to write a separate chapter focused on critically judging the *value* of saintliness. While recognizing that some great saints attract followers who go on to start institutions with corporate ambitions resulting in "hypocrisy, tyranny and meanness" (p. 262), James proceeds to conclude that "the saintly group of qualities is indispensable to the world's welfare" (p. 290). Such indulgence in a discussion of values has all but disappeared from modern psychology as the enthusiasm grew over the years to build a value-free science of psychology. As the twenty-first century starts unfolding, however, there is perceptible thaw in icy cold response of psychologists to value-loaded topics such as saintliness contaminated by their association with religion. An indication of this is that a well-known psychologist like Paul Ekman is engaged in a serious discussion with Dalai Lama, responding to the latter's appeal for finding ways to overcome the obstacles to enhancing compassion (Ekman 2008).

Concluding this chapter, it would be useful to briefly consider the ideal of self-actualization which is reflected in modern psychology primarily through the work of Maslow (1970). The concept of self-actualization, has a long history in Western thought; it goes back to Aristotle. In Nichomachean Ethics, he defines the good as the activities in which the life functions specific to human beings are most fully realized. Happiness is attained when one uses her abilities to their fullest potential. He gives the example of a harpist who would be happiest if he excels at the art of playing the harp (Aristotle 1985, p. 17). In presenting his views of self-actualization, Maslow (1971, p. 133) clearly follows in the tradition of Aristotle giving explicit reference to Aristotle. Maslow's examples of self-actualized persons involves highly accomplished persons including a couple of American heroes (Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson), a great scientist (Einstein), some great thinkers (Spinoza, William James, Aldous Huxley), and a couple of highly respected women (Eleanor Roosevelt, Jane Adams), and a saintly artist-cum-doctor (Albert Schweitzer). Looked at from Coan's (1977) typology of hero, artist, sage, and saint, Maslow's view of self-actualized persons presents a mixed bag. This is understandable since there is no reason for either cultures, or ideals they cherish, to fit into single little categories. However, as an overall estimate of ideals more commonly presented in traditional Indian and modern Western psychologies, some general observations may be made.

It appears that by and large modern Western psychology has highly valued the actualization of potentials through a process of growth indicating continual change for something better in one form of human endeavor or other. Note that aside from

Maslow's views just presented, Carl Rogers speaks of the "fully functioning person" as an ideal. The word "becoming" in the title of his book On Becoming a Person (Rogers 1961) indicates an emphasis on the process of continual change for better. Human life is viewed as a process of continuing *evolution*. "Evolving self" is the title of at least two books (Kegan 1982; Csikszentmihalyi 1993). Kegan uses the metaphor of the spiral to indicate how a new round of change builds on top of a previous round and the spiral continues. Erikson (1982), who presents a most elaborate model of human development spanning from cradle to the grave, emphasizes the continual and unending change explicitly saying that the sense of self is forever revisable. Further, Csikszentmihalyi (1991) emphasizes that when a person's activities remain in an uninterrupted flow, then the experience becomes naturally enjoyable. In contemporary Western psychology, the emphasis is clearly on becoming (rather than one's Being), which implies that one always tries to become different from what one currently is. The reason to point out the overall focus on change is to point out a contrast with Indian psychology where we encounter a persistent emphasis on being; there is a serious attempt to find out what there is within oneself that was there in the past, which there is at present, and will remain so forever in the future. The concepts of *samādhi*, *kaivalya*, or *nirvāṇa*, all are suggestive of an attainment of a stable state or *stasis*, a final position of rest from which one need not move, expecting some kind of change for better.

Chapter 3
Centrality of Consciousness

In the Indian model as we described in Chap. 1, the person is embodied consciousness. Understanding the nature and function of consciousness is, therefore, central to doing psychology in general and for understanding the person in particular. In fact, even in the Western tradition, when psychology began as a science in the later part of nineteenth century, it was defined as the science of consciousness. The methodological problems of dealing with consciousness, the overriding concern to make psychology a science in the positivist sense, and the advent of behaviorism with its emphasis on objectivity all but extinguished the interest of psychologists in studying consciousness by the middle of last century. However, with the increasing realization of the limited scope of behaviorist psychology and the greater attention paid to understanding the cognitive processes in the human system, there was a resurgence of interest in studying mind and consciousness in the later half of twentieth century. Today, the interest in studying consciousness in the West is strong and widespread not only in psychology but also in neuroscience and related disciplines. Actually, there are several journals devoted exclusively to the area of consciousness. The *Journal of Consciousness Studies* has completed 20 years of continuous publication registering significant growth.

The vexatious problem that continues to trouble those engaged in consciousness studies is the problem of multiple connotations, the concept of consciousness carries with it. As Miller (1987) aptly observed, "[c]onsciousness is a word worn smooth by a million tongues" (p. 34), there has been prolonged discussion and an endless debate as to what one means by consciousness. As Block (1995b) observes, consciousness "connotes a number of different concepts and denotes a number of different phenomena" (p. 227). With all the varied meanings it carries, several scholars have begun to wonder whether there is any unifying characteristic of consciousness that runs through its multiples usages. An entire issue of the *Journal Consciousness Studies* (Vol. 16, No. 5, 2009) was devoted to the topic of defining consciousness. We are, however, no closer now to agreeing on a generally acceptable definition.

Culling through the vast published literature and recent online discussions, Vimal (2009) refers to 40 different meanings of consciousness. The list, he confesses, is by no means exhaustive. Acknowledging that the "prospects for reaching

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any single, agreed theory-independent definition of consciousness thus appears remote," Vimal suggests that the 40 aspects (meanings) of consciousness identified by him fall into two broad categories. Twenty of these meanings refer to *function* of consciousness and the other 20 to *experience* of consciousness. Among the functions, he includes the ability to discriminate stimuli, to engage in thinking, and conceptualize information. Experience of consciousness refers to the "what is it like to be conscious" aspect and the qualia and subjectivity in experience.

Jonkisz (2012) proposed a fourfold taxonomy of consciousness, which he believes to be exhaustive and inclusive of all varieties of consciousness currently discussed in cognitive neuroscience, clinical psychology, philosophy of mind, and related areas. He believes that this classification provides a basis for a unified conception of consciousness. The fourfold categorization utilizes four different criteria to classify consciousness. The first category has the epistemic criterion that identifies two kinds of consciousness, subjective and objective. They are referred to as *kinds* of consciousness. Subjective consciousness includes cognitions from the first-person perspective. In short, it is subjective experience. Objective consciousness refers to cognitions from observer's (third-person) perspective. These two kinds of consciousness are recognized and discussed endlessly by philosophers under different names. Some pointed out the seemingly unbridgeable gulf between subjective experience and objective observation of the phenomena of consciousness. The inherent chasm between the two is the basis for considering the subjective consciousness as a "hard" problem (Chalmers 1995). Again, there is the corollary problem of the epistemic asymmetry and the explanatory gap as noted by Levine (1983).

The second criterion is semantic. Jonkisz distinguishes five forms of consciousness under this rubric. He designates them as *orders* of consciousness. They are in his words (1) sensorimotor consciousness, (2) perceptual consciousness, (3) meta-perceptual consciousness, (4) self-consciousness, and (5) meta-self-consciousness. The first and second forms are about environment and percepts, respectively. These two forms of consciousness manifest below the threshold of "conscious" awareness and are inferred from the behavior such as, for example, an animal's avoidance of obstacles without being actually aware of them (sensorimotor consciousness) and seeking a safe place to rest or move in a more desirable direction in search of food (perceptual consciousness).

The third category, distinguished by physiological criteria, is referred to as *states* of consciousness. It has four subcategories—(1) wakeful states, (2) sleep states, (3) impaired states, and (4) altered states. These are well-known forms and are self-explanatory. By applying what he calls "pragmatic" criterion, Jonkisz identifies three *types* of consciousness—(1) source-defined, (2) use-defined, and (3) system-defined. Under the source-defined, he includes visual auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and proprioceptive (bodily) kinds of awareness. Under use-defined, we have such things as time consciousness, social consciousness, and emotional consciousness. System-defined consciousness is distinguished on the basis of the

cognitive system in which it occurs, such as animal, human, machine, and artificial consciousness.

In the scheme of Jonkisz, there are thus 14 forms of consciousness. He hopes that the taxonomy presented would help as a tool for clarification and identification of aspects of consciousness under discussion. However, questions arise whether the list exhausts all forms of consciousness and whether the fourth category, the pragmatic types of consciousness adds anything significant to the classification. All these aspects can be subsumed under the other categories.

Rao (1998, 2001, 2002, 2011b) has discussed the concept of consciousness rather extensively in his writings; and he has provided an orderly taxonomy of consciousness that incorporates Indian as well as Western notions. Rao's taxonomy of consciousness is given in Fig. 3.1. Rao first divides consciousness into two main categories—(1) transcendental and (2) transactional. In the transcendental domain, consciousness is utter subjectivity beyond the duality of subject and object and with little or no distinction between knowing and being. It is a state of consciousness as-such, an experience of pure consciousness. Transactional consciousness is consciousness as reflected in the mind, where clear distinctions between subject and object, and between knowing, feeling, and being are made. We do not find any reference to transcendental consciousness in the Western taxonomy of

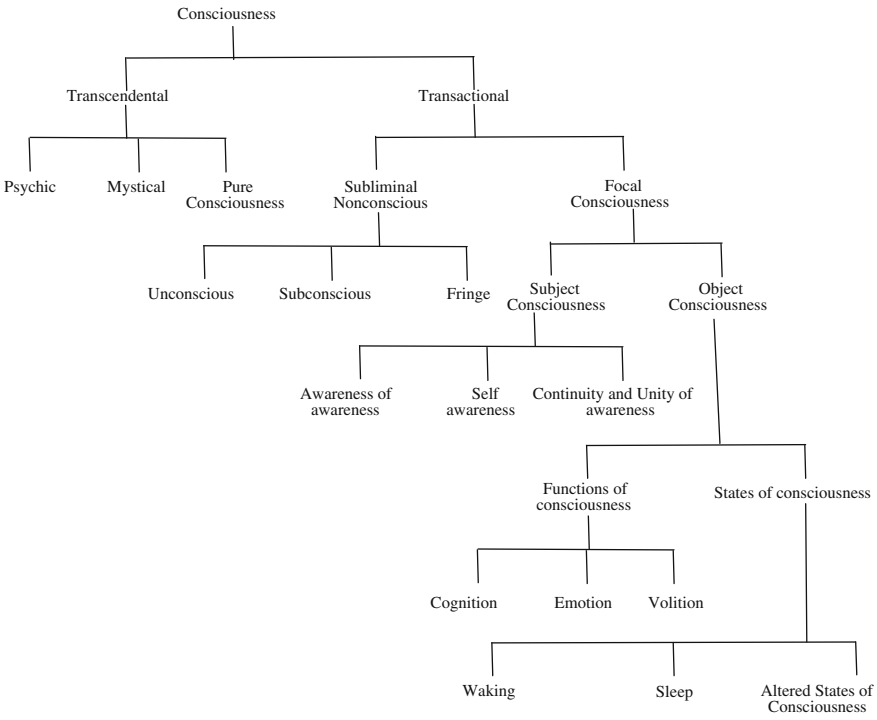


Fig. 3.1 K.R. Rao's taxonomy of consciousness

consciousness as given by scholars like Jonkisz. This is mainly because the kind of distinction made between consciousness and mind in Indian psychology is missing in the Western discussion as pointed out in the first chapter. Transcendental consciousness is in a sense transpersonal. It manifests (1) in the experience of pure states of consciousness, (2) mystic awareness and higher *samādhi* states, and (3) in the cases of anomalous psychic events. The defining characteristic of transcendental consciousness is that it is transcognitive and does not involve sensory-motor participation at the primary level as we find in transactional consciousness.

Transactional consciousness is of two kinds—(1) *below* the threshold of awareness and (2) *above* the threshold. In the *below* category, we have (i) the *unconscious* in the Freudian and Jungian sense, (ii) the subliminal as in subliminal perception and implicit memory, and (iii) fringe awareness. The *above* category refers to focal awareness, which is again of two kinds—subject consciousness and object consciousness. Subject consciousness refers to the experience of the knowing subject and the modes of awareness there in. Included under this head are (1) awareness that one is aware, (2) self-awareness, and (3) awareness of unity and continuity in one's consciousness. Object consciousness involves awareness predicated of an object. It is awareness of or about an object, whether physical or mental, real or imaginary. This is a classification that is commonly made in the Western tradition as we have noted. It is the classification that Jonkisz makes under *kinds* of consciousness, and is similar to phenomenal-access consciousness distinction made by Block (1995b).

Object consciousness may be of two kinds based on its functions and states. Among functions, we may include attention, intention, retention, and other processes involved in cognition, emotion, and volition. States of consciousness are classified into waking, sleeping, dreams, and other altered states.

As pointed out in the first chapter, we may distinguish between three distinct senses of consciousness which we need to keep in perspective. In the first sense, Consciousness (with capital "C") refers to consciousness as the principle underlying reality as in *Brahman*. In this sense it is absolute, universal, and completely unqualified. *Consciousness* (italicized) in the second sense refers to consciousness as-such, contentless but the one that illuminates all cognitive awareness. The third is the sense in which consciousness is generally understood in the Western tradition and most of psychological discussion. It is the sense to which the above classifications under the category of transactional consciousness refer.

The above taxonomy helps us to have some clarity about the concept of consciousness in its multiple uses. One thing that may be kept in focus while discussing consciousness is whether it essentially refers to the mind or an aspect of it, or whether it is something more and different from the mind. The Indian and Western perspectives are markedly different in this regard. Important implications ensue from these differences. The concept of consciousness is very much theory-loaded, and consequently may not be meaningfully discussed from a theory-neutral position. There are indeed many theories of consciousness. The following are some of the major theories in the Indian tradition.

3.1 Consciousness in Indian Psychology

While consciousness is indeed central to Indian psychology, it will not be correct to say that there is a singular perspective that characterizes all of Indian thought on consciousness. There is a wide spectrum of views ranging from "embodied" to "embrained" consciousness (a phrase borrowed from Jonkisz)—embodied in the sense of an ontologically distinct entity/principle irreducible to any physical forms, and "embrained" meaning that consciousness is something generated by the cortical processes. While different shades exist between the two extremes, there are identifiable dominant trends in Hindu thought from the Vedas and Upaniṣads to Sri Aurobindo as well as in nonorthodox systems like Buddhism and Jainism with interesting and heuristic differences between them. Since it is not possible to cover all these in a short chapter, the following discussion is drawn primarily from the salient views of Sāṁkhya-Yoga and AdvaitaVedānta, two of the orthodox systems, and from Buddhism. Again, the focus of our discussion is not on their differences, but on their complementarity to understand consciousness. Consequently, these views are presented under the following three heads, metaphysics, phenomenology, and psychology.

3.2 Advaita Metaphysics of Consciousness

The metaphysics of consciousness in the Indian tradition goes back to the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣadic thought is called Vedānta because Upaniṣads are the end portions of the Vedas. Upaniṣads deal with the nature of understanding ultimate reality encompassing the manifest world and the individual "self" and the relationship between them. The fundamental reality is *Brahman/Ātman*. It is consciousness in its most abstract form, considered as the Supreme Self. Bādarāyaṇa of second century BC put together the essence of Upaniṣadic thought on consciousness in his *Brahma-Sūtra*, also called *Vedānta-Sūtra* which is the foundational text of Vedānta metaphysics of pure consciousness. Many subsequent thinkers wrote commentaries on *Brahma-Sūtra*. They include Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and Madhva. Śaṅkara's brand of Vedānta is called AdvaitaVedānta because it advocates uncompromising nondualism between the manifest world and the Self. Rāmānuja's school of Vedānta is labeled as Viśiṣṭādvaita because in it we find a kind of qualified nondualism. Madhva interprets Vedānta entirely in dualistic terms. The most influential among the commentaries of *Brahma-Sūtra*, however, is Śaṅkara's *Brahma-Sūtra Bhāṣya* (Śaṅkara 1890, 1980).

The central thesis of *Brahma-Sūtra* as interpreted by Śaṅkara is that the fundamental reality is *Brahman/Ātman. Brahman* is the Supreme Consciousness. It is the single intelligent and unifying principle behind the multitude of changing manifestations one encounters in the world.

Brahman/Ātman is pure consciousness. It is self-manifesting as well as self-illuminating. It is nonintentional and non-relational consciousness. It has neither form nor rests in anything else that has a form. It is limited neither by space nor by time. It is both subject and object. It is knowledge itself, undifferentiated and utterly subjective. Consequently, it is indescribable and beyond categorization as this or that. The best way to understand it is to know what it is not than what it is. Here then there is a clear recognition of the difficulty to conceptualize consciousness in its undifferentiated form. In a sense we are cognitively closed to it.

The closest description one could have of *Brahman* is *sat-cit-ānanda*. First, *Brahman* signifies existence (*sat*). Knowing and being are not differentiated in it. Second, it is consciousness as-such (*cit*). At the level of the *Brahman*, there is no differentiation between knower, known, and knowing. *Brahman* is also conceived as absolute bliss (*ānanda*) in that it is behind all that is truly enjoyable, genuine happiness. Thus *Brahman* is the substratum that underlies all existence (*sat*), knowledge (*cit*), and positive emotion (*ānanda*).

Following the Upaniṣadic tradition, Śaṅkara offers three lines of argument in support of the existence of *Brahman* as supreme consciousness. First, Śaṅkara points to the Vedic texts and claims the existence of *Brahman* on the authority of the *Vedas*. Second, he offers a number of logical arguments in support of the existence of the all-embracing *Brahman* and attempts to refute criticisms and alternative postulations on rational grounds. The basic argument is that the existence of Brahman in implied is the very act of being conscious. There can be no conscious states without consciousness as-such. The former presupposes the latter. The second line of argument is that, since Consciousness admits of no distinctions such as subject and object, those distinctions found in mental phenomena do not belong to consciousness as-such, but to the world of objects. Therefore, we need to postulate a realm of pure consciousness where there are no such distinctions. Finally, we need to postulate undifferentiated awareness underlying all states of consciousness as a universal feature underlying all varieties of consciousness (Mohanty 1993).

The third line of argument, possibly the most central of them, is that its truth is revealed in meditative realization. In other words, the existence of *Ātman* is a matter of direct experience. Through the practice of meditation, one can attain a state of *samādhi* where he/she experiences consciousness as-such, participates in *Brahman* and realizes the oneness with it. It is a state of non-relational and nonintentional pure consciousness devoid of subject–object duality, a self-luminous state of absolute bliss. It is self-revealing in that it does not need anything else to reveal it, just as a burning lamp requires no other lamp to make it visible.

What is the relationship between the absolute *Brahman*, and the person (*jīva*)? We will discuss this later in some detail. Briefly, the relation is exemplified in the *mahāvākya* of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, i.e., *tat-tvam-asi*, (thou are that). The Supreme Consciousness, the *Brahman*, is the ground of all existence, including one's own. Indeed the relationship is one of identity obscured by the existential condition of ignorance and the drama staged by the *māya. Māya* is the Advaitic conception of the veiling power, cosmic illusion. The person with her own identity

is essentially the empirical mask masquerading for the true Self on the stage set in *saṁsāra* and the act played by the *māya.* The *ātman* within is the transcendental subject "I"whereas *jīva* is the empirical subject "me." In Advaita, the transcendental "I" is the *Ātman.* It is real in absolute sense. The empirical "me" is transitorily real but not absolutely so. It is like an experience in a dream which is real while dreaming and not real on waking.

We may also note at this point the difference between *jīva* and *jīva-sākṣin*. The latter is an interesting concept that helps us to understand among other things the relation between *consciousnesses* considered as unchanging and inactive but illuminating the mind, and matter seen as changing and active. Further, *sākṣin* is also useful in understanding how the one and indivisible Consciousness, *Brahman/ Ātman*, appears as various *ātmans* in the multitude of persons without itself undergoing any transformations. *Jīva* in this view is embodied consciousness, whereas *sākṣin* is the witnessing *consciousness*. The consciousness in *jīva* is limited, qualified, and modified by its association with the mind. The *sākṣin*, however, stays aloof from the mind and is unaffected by it. In *jīva*, consciousness is what is reflected in the mind. In *sākṣin*, it is *consciousness* as-such. In *jīva*, consciousness is immanent in the mind; in *sākṣin* it transcends the mind and is on its own.

A later Advaita thinker Vidyāraṇya, in his *Pañcadaśī*, likens the *sākṣin* to a lamp in a theater (see Vidyāraṇya Muni [alias Mādhava], fourteenth century/1987). The lamp only sheds light, which illumines on whomever it falls, whether it is the actors on the stage or the audience in the hall. Vidyāraṇya says that the owner of the play being staged is the *jīva*; the *buddhi* (mind) is the dancing damsel; the senses are the accompanying orchestra; the objects of the senses are the audience in the hall; and the *sākṣin* is the light that reveals all of them by illuminating the *jīva*, *buddhi*, and the sense objects. Even when the functions of the mind are in abeyance as in deep sleep, the light of the *sākṣin* does not cease. It is this unceasing self-luminosity that gives one the sense of continuing stream of consciousness (*Pañcadaśī*, 10.11–14).

Advaita thinkers believe that *jīva*, embodied consciousness, which normally gives illusory knowledge couched in subject–object duality, can have pure conscious experience. Vidyāraṇya in his *Jīvanmukti Viveka* asserts that *jīvanmukti* (embodied liberation) is possible and that the person can access consciousness as-such and realize the intrinsic identity between the Self and the *ātman* (see Vidyāraṇyasaraswati 1897). *Jīva* without encumbrance of the mind is *sākṣin*, which is none other than consciousness as-such, the *Brahman*, manifesting at the level of individual.

What is of special interest to psychologists in the AdvaitaVedānta conception of pure consciousness and its accessibility in the embodied condition is that pure consciousness is not a mere metaphysical abstraction but a claimed fact of experience. A pure conscious experience, it is asserted, is intrinsically authentic, it does not require any external validation. While experiencing a pure conscious state, the person has transcognitive realization of truth as distinguished from cognitive knowing. Realization engenders instant conviction of certainty. Its validity is reflexive and apodictic. As a fact of experience, it is subject of study and scientific investigation. In fact, in the Indian tradition, there is a kind of mental technology

involving procedures and practices that are explicitly designed to achieve states of pure consciousness. The so-called fourth state or *turīyā* referred to in the Upaniṣads and the advanced *samādhi* states in yoga are examples of higher states of consciousness.

Experience of pure consciousness in the embodied condition is not merely a state of emptiness of the mind devoid of any effect on the person. Rather such an experience is generally a life-transforming event. It is remembered for its uniqueness and extraordinary nature. More importantly, what is revealed in such experiences is realized in life. It is a state where not only the dichotomy between subject and object, ubiquitous in normal knowing processes, is obliterated, but also the divide between knowing and being is bridged. This state is exemplified, as stated earlier, in the Upaniṣadic statement "to know *Brahman* is to be *Brahman.*" The lives of people like Ramana Maharshi are cited as examples of persons that had frequent experiences of pure consciousness. The difference between a genuine saint and an accomplished scholar is that the saint manifests in his being what he knows, whereas in the scholar there may be no congruence between what he knows and what he does.

3.3 Buddhist Phenomenology of Consciousness

Whereas consciousness is a core philosophical concept in Vedānta, it is an equally central concept in Buddhist psychology. The rich contributions of Advaita are metaphysical relating to the notion of pure consciousness. For the Buddha, however, the main concern is with the phenomena of consciousness in the empirical world and not its metaphysics. Consequently, the focus is not on consciousness as-such in abstract but on consciousness as it manifests in the human condition. The emphasis is consequently on empirical aspects of consciousness and not on its abstract and transcendental forms. However, Buddhist thinkers did not deny the extraordinary and transcendental states of consciousness while dismissing the substantive mind and the unchanging Self or *ātman*. In Buddhistic thought, we find interesting discussion of the different stages involved in the progress from empirical to transcendental states of consciousness, from *saṁsāra* to *nirvāṇa.* Along the way, Buddhism provides us with a rich phenomenology of consciousness and an interesting taxonomy of its states.

Like Hindu thought, Buddhism in India is developed into various schools by different thinkers after Gautama's death. Between its rise and decline spanning over 1700 years, Buddhism in India passed through two important phases and gave birth to four main schools and several more sub-schools. The first is the Hīnayāna phase. Theravādins belong to the Hīnayāna tradition. In Hīnayāna, there are two principal philosophical schools—Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika. The two together are called Sarvāstivādins, who uphold a kind of pluralistic realism. Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti are the chief exponents of Buddhist logic and epistemology. Kumāralabdha is said to be the founder of the Sautrāntika school. Hīnayāna is more a person-oriented

tradition rather than one focused on society, with emphasis placed on individual transformation. Dharmottara and Vasubandhu and his commentator Yaśomitra are important exponents of this system.

The second phase in Indian Buddhism is the emergence of Mahāyāna tradition. Two important philosophical schools arose out of it. They are Yogācāra and Mādhyamika schools. Among Yogācāra teachers are Asaṅga and his brother Vasubandhu. There are some questions whether this Vasubandhu is the same as the Vasubandhu (fourth century CE) who wrote the Sautrāntika treatise *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam.* The traditional view is that they both are the same and that, under the influence of his brother Asaṅga, Vasubandhu was converted later from the Sautrāntika to the Yogācāra school. The chief exponent of the Mādhyamika school is Nāgārjuna, who probably lived in the first or second century CE. Another important figure in Mādhyamika school is Candrakīrti (seventh century CE), the author of *Mādhyamikāvatāra.*

Of the different schools of Buddhism, Theravāda is the most psychologically relevant in the Abhidharma tradition. Our discussion therefore is devoted in large part to Theravāda ideas.

Consciousness at the empirical level manifests as a relation between a subject and an object. However, subject and object are relative and mutually dependent concepts. "Both the subject and the object are alike transitory, the relation alone between the two impermanent correlates remaining constant. This constancy of relation, which … is consciousness itself, gives rise to erroneous ideas of personal identity" (Aung 1929, p. 11). Again, "life is like an ever changing river, having its source in birth, its goal is in death receiving from the tributary streams of sense constant accretions to its flood, and ever dispensing to the world around it the thought stuff, it has gathered by the way" (ibid., p. 12). The basic unit of consciousness is thought. Buddhaghoṣa defines consciousness as "that which thinks of its object" (1920, Vol. 1, p. 148).

Consciousness is conceived as a dynamic process. It is not considered a stable and static entity in the human condition. It flows like a stream. The empirical consciousness in our awareness is the flowing stream of thoughts, feelings, emotions, and intentions. Beneath the identifiable stream of continuous but changing status of awareness, there is a subliminal stream, which is, unlike the supraliminal stream, a thought-free state like a state of deep, dreamless sleep. In Theravāda Buddhism, this stream is called *bhavaṅga*, which is "the cause, reason, indispensable condition of our being regarded subjectively as continuous, the sine qua non of our existence, that without which one cannot subsist or exist" (Aung 1929, pp. 265–266). Unavailable to introspective awareness, "it is the subconscious state of the mind—'below the threshold' of consciousness—by which we conceive continuous subjective existence as possible" (ibid., p. 266). Thus we find in Buddhist thought a basic distinction between conscious awareness and its non-conscious base in the *bhavaṅga*. Consequently, consciousness is more than overt awareness available to introspection. The unconscious *bhavaṅga* is the subconscious terrain that serves as the depository and carrier of *karma*, which influences one's behavior, his thought, passion, and action. *Bhavaṅga* is the

foundational base of psychological being, the ground condition that provides for the continuity and identity of the changing states of the mind and the person.

Bhavaṅga as a psychological concept first appears in *Milindapañha* (Sarachchandra 1958/1994) in the context of explaining the continuity of the stream of consciousness despite its apparent break in sleep. Nāgasena tells king Milinda that, when a man is in deep sleep, the mind "goes into *bhavaṅga.*" Nāgasena, however, does not develop the *bhavaṅga* concept beyond the notion that it is the resting point for the inactive mind submerged as it were in an unconscious stream. It was the Theravādins like Buddhaghoṣa who extended the connotation of *bhavaṅga* to include not only sleep states but also higher forms of consciousness in order to account for the continuing cycle of births in one's march toward realizing *nirvāṇa*.

In the Yogācāra school of Buddhism, also called Vijñānavāda, we find a full-blown notion of the unconscious in all its complexity in its concept of *ālaya-vijñāna. Ālaya* is the subterrain stream of consciousness, conceived by the Vijñānavādins not merely as the ground condition of all our thoughts and feelings but all of reality. As Radhakrishnan (1923/1989) describes, it "is the mother sea of consciousness, out of which things arise and into which they again return" (Vol. I, p. 631). Consciousness as it is experienced is a manifestation of *ālaya*, which is considered as universal consciousness. The *ālaya*, the ocean of consciousness, like *bhavaṅga* in Theravāda Buddhism, is a continually changing subconscious source and sustainer of identity and continuity. In fact, it is even more. It is not only a storehouse of consciousness, but it is also a spring of pure *consciousness*. Its manifestations in the empirical world are, however, blemished because of the existential conditions. While *bhavaṅga* and *ālaya-vijñāna* refer to the unconscious base of our being, there are significant differences between these two concepts (see Rao 2011b for a detailed discussion).

3.3.1 Elements of Consciousness

Empirical consciousness, as we have noted, arises as a relation between a subject and an object and results as thoughts. A thought itself is a complex amalgamation of various elements, which are of two kinds—one relating to the object of thought and the other involving mental factors. The latter are called *cetasikas*, mental elements. Some of these are universal in that they are found in all thoughts, while others are present in some and not in all.

Anuruddha in his *Abhidhammatthasaṁgaha* refers to 52 different elements of consciousness. These are divided into four groups. The first group identifies seven elements which are considered universal in that they are common to all thoughts. These are (1) contact (*phassa*), (2) feeling (*vedanā*), (3) volition (*cetanā*), (4) perception (*saññā*), (5) individuation or one-pointed concentration (*ekāgratā*), (6) psychic life (*jīvitindriya*), and (7) attention (*manaskāra*). Clearly, the so-called universal elements are the processes and steps involved in cognitive consciousness. First is the

contact between the subject and the object giving rise to the second, the feeling, which constitutes the subjectivity or phenomenal aspect of consciousness. "Feeling," as Buddhaghoṣa (1920) puts it, "is that which feels. It has: (1) experiencing as characteristic, (2) enjoying as function, or processing the desirable position of an object as function, (3) taste of the mental properties as manifestation, and (4) tranquility as proximate cause" (1920, Vol. 1, p. 145). *Jīvitindriya* refers to the life process itself without which no psychic activity is possible. Again, volition, attention, concentration, and perceiving are the essential ingredients in all our cognitive activity.

The second group consists of six particular elements. These are value-free in that they are neither moral nor immoral. These are referred to as (1) *vitakka* (initial application of the mind), (2) *vicāra* (continued application of the mind, (3) *adhimokkha* (decision/resolution), (4) *vīriya* (effort), (5) *pīti* (joy), and (6) *chanda* (intention). The special group of elements is called particular inasmuch as they do not accompany all thoughts. They are also beyond moral considerations. It would seem therefore these elements appear to relate to thoughts arising in meditative states. *Vitakka* and *vicāra* are more like *dhāraṇa* and *dhyāna* in yoga practice. These do require intention, effort, and steadfast resolution. Joy is the result of successful meditation.

The third group of elements relate to immoral thoughts. They are 14 such elements. The 14 immoral elements (*akuśalacetasika*) are (1) delusion (*moha*), (2) impudence (*ahirika*), (3) carelessness (*anottappa*), (4) distraction (*uddhacca*), (5) greed (*lobha*), (6) error (*diṭṭhi*), (7) conceit (*māna*), (8) hate (*dosa*), (9) jealousy (*issā*), (10) selfishness (*macchariya*), (11) worry (*kukkucca*), (12) sloth (*thīna*), (13) lethargy (*middha*), and (14) doubt (*vicikicchā*). These are the motivating factors leading to evil acts. Of them attachment, greed, ill-will, jealousy, and delusion (*moha*) are the basic and foundational source of evil acts. Attachment is rooted in desires, cravings, greed, liking, acquisitiveness, immoderation in eating, and lust for power and praise. Ill-will is rooted in aversion. It involves hatred, envy, jealousy, and remorse. It is a state of agitation accompanied by repulsion to the object of cognition. It leads to aggressive acts, slighting others, and destroying things. Delusion is essentially ignorance, inability to discriminate between the right and the wrong. Delusional thoughts are sometimes marked by doubt, restlessness, and tension. The element of delusion is present in all immoral thoughts.

The fourth group of elements are those that accompany moral thoughts. The moral or wholesome elements (*sobhana* or *kuśalacetasika*) are 25 in number. Nineteen of them are common to all moral thoughts and six are present only in some of them. The common elements in moral thoughts include confidence, mindfulness, equanimity, and nonattachment. Among the particular elements in this category are right speech, right action and right livelihood, pity, rejoicing in the happiness of others, and wisdom. Just as immoral thoughts lead to evil acts, moral thoughts lead to moral actions, which according to Buddhists are of ten kinds. Thoughts with moral elements in them lead to agreeable effects and happy consequences. They ward off evil acts. The moral thoughts with wisdom element in them are motivated by nonattachment, right knowledge, and no ill-will to others.

3.3.2 Four Planes of Consciousness

In Buddhist thought, we find four planes of consciousness—(1) *kāmaloka*, (2) *rūpaloka*, (3) *arūpaloka*, and (4) *lokuttara* (see Fig. 3.2). The nature of manifest consciousness is believed to depend on one's psychophysical development. The first plane is related to the empirical world, the world of desires (*kāmaloka*). This is the phenomenal world of *saṁsāra* characterized by constant change with which all of us are familiar. It is the sensuous domain. In this plane, the objects of consciousness have ego-reference. Here there is scope for tension between the ever-present subject–object duality. This results in desires and an unending craving to satisfy them. In the realm of *rūpa*, sensuous preoccupation gives way to meditative reflection, concentration, rapture, and happiness. They help to eliminate the hindrances that bind one's thoughts to the sensuous world and the desires ensuing from such interactions. In reflection one overcomes doubt. Rapture destroys jealousy and hatred. Happiness dissipates restlessness and worry. Concentration is the antidote to greed and one that leads to the *arūpa* plane of formless consciousness.

Arūpaloka refers to the world without form realized through meditation. When one enters this domain there is awareness of the infinity of space, infinity of consciousness, and nothingness. One also has in this plane transcognitive and transpersonal experiences. As the meditator moves on the path of meditation toward *nibbāna* (*nirvāṇa*), she enters the *lokuttara* (which literally means beyond the world) plane and participates in the truly transcendental realm of *consciousness*. This is the highest state one can hope to achieve. *Consciousness* in the *lokuttara* realm is more like pure, unintentional consciousness. Here *consciousness* is not a source of information and awareness, but a state of being. It is a state of realization. Buddhaghoṣa in his *Atthasālinī* provides a clear distinction between the mundane

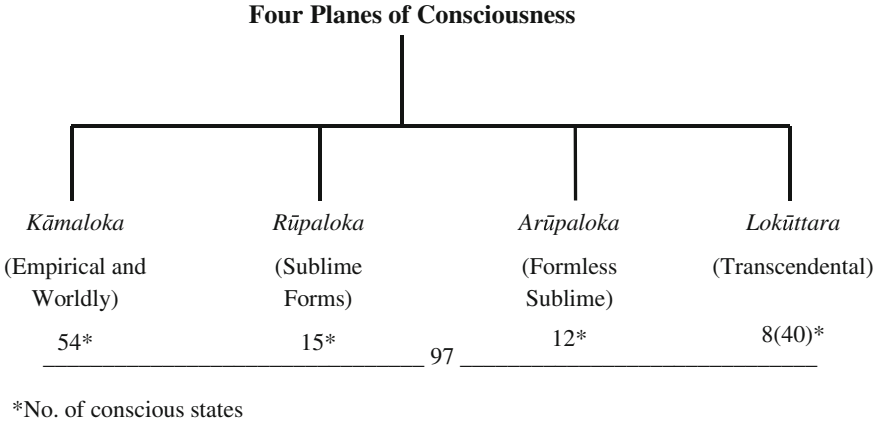


Fig. 3.2 Four planes of consciousness

consciousness in the empirical world and transcendental *consciousness*. In empirical consciousness, what we have is cognitive thought whereas in transcendental *consciousness* it is transcognitive realization.

3.3.3 Forms of Consciousness

Buddhist thinkers distinguish between a variety of forms consciousness takes in the four planes described above. In the domain of *kāmaloka*, the empirical world, consciousness takes 54 different forms. These are divided into three classes—(1) moral states, (2) immoral states, and (3) morally indifferent states. In *kāmaloka*, the empirical world of sensuous desires, there are 8 moral states, 12 immoral states, and 34 morally indifferent states. The indifferent states are further divided into (a) 11 inoperative states and 23 resultant states. Moral states result from correct knowledge and mental purity. They are accompanied by confidence, mindfulness, and joy. They lead to ten kinds of moral actions such as charity and value-based behavior. Some of them involve non-bias and nonattachment and absence of ill-will to others, but they are without wisdom. Immoral thoughts lead to unethical conduct. They are prompted by attachment and greed. They are accompanied by delusion and ignorance. They cause restlessness, doubt, and tension in the mind.

Moral and immoral thoughts produce *karma* that binds the person in the present or the future. Inoperative forms of consciousness and resultant states do not produce any *karma*. Inoperative states of consciousness have no *kārmic* consequences. Resultant states are those resulting from past *karma*, which produce no new *karma*.

In *rūpaloka* plane there are 15 forms. They are all sublime resulting from sustained practice of meditation. All these forms are moral. They are also intentional in that they are about things that become more and more subtle as one enters the formless world (*arūpaloka*). The objects of thoughts in the formless realm are abstract and completely subtle. They are 12 such states devoid of any form. The *lokuttara* domain is a state of transcendence beyond all thought with or without form. It is a transcognitive state of what may be called pure consciousness, where there is no distinction between knowing and being. They are eight primary forms of transcendental states of *consciousness*, which are expanded by fivefold by another classification. Thus, we find 89 forms of consciousness—54 in *kāmaloka*, 15 in *rūpaloka*, 12 in *arūpaloka*, and 8 (or 40) in *lokuttara* states.

What is interesting in Buddhist classification of consciousness is that it considers consciousness from a variety of perspectives, taking into consideration cognitive, emotive, and conative factors and their ethical implications. The entire exercise is with the ultimate goal of understanding the person and molding her thoughts and conduct to achieve higher states of awareness and being, avoiding possible pitfalls on the way.

A given thought may arise spontaneously as a consequence of past actions. Or it may be something desired by the person and determined by volition. In Buddhist thought, whether an action is voluntary and self-willed or a spontaneous occurrence

has important implications because the former is the one that produces binding *karma* and curtails the freedom of the person. Cognition of an object may be accompanied by feelings. Feelings may be wholesome or unwholesome. Cognitions may be true or false. Permutation and combination of these and associated factors enable the Buddhists to identify the variety of forms consciousness takes in the mundane world of desire as well as in the worlds with form and without form entered by earnest practice of meditation in a disciplined way. In the *lokuttara* state *consciousness* is on its own, totally free, unencumbered, and unconditioned. The entire endeavor of the person in the final analysis is to achieve this state called *nirvaṇa.*

The classification of consciousness into the myriad forms by Buddhists, as we have noted, is more comprehensive than anything we find in Hindu systems including Yoga. However, the core of conceptualization in Hindu and Buddhist thought appears to be surprisingly similar despite the admittedly vast differences between them. The basic point of agreement is that consciousness is bound in its embodied condition as it manifests in our empirical world. The human endeavor is one of unbounding this state so that humans function as autonomous beings, unconditioned, and free. This is the common goal. Again, the methods of reaching this goal are also very much similar.

In Vedānta, as we have noted, consciousness is classed into four basic categories —waking, dream, sleep, and *turīyā* states. These are not very different from the four planes of consciousness in Buddhism. The waking and *turīyā* states are nearly identical with *kāmaloka* and *lokuttara* states, respectively. The difference is that the middle categories of sleep and dream states are the further subdivisions of empirical consciousness in Vedānta, whereas the *rūpa* and *arūpa* categories are subdivisions of *turīyā* state in Vedānta. We can readily see how similar are the conceptions of pure consciousness in Advaita and *lokuttara* in Buddhism. Bodhisatva in a state of *nirvāṇa* is very much like the Advaita Brahman, Consciousness. Both are undetermined, undifferentiated, and impervious to symbolic representation. *Nirvāṇa* is a pure conscious state accessible to direct awareness and in this state there is no differentiation between knowing and being. It is a state of bliss in its ultimate sense. Attributions of good and evil, right and wrong are simply inapplicable to it. It is a state of being where the veil of ignorance is removed and the person is installed in complete, undifferentiated subjectivity. This is a state one can hope to achieve in an embodied condition according to Advaita as well as Buddhism.

While there is thus a basic compatibility between the Hindu and Buddhist thought we discussed, we may not ignore the differences between them. The focus in much of Buddhism is on empirical consciousness, whereas in Advaita it is transcendental aspects of Consciousness. From a psychological perspective what is rich in Buddhism is the profound phenomenology of consciousness in the empirical world. The phenomenology of consciousness may be adapted and utilized in clinical practice to help disturbed individuals. It could also be used in designing valued-based pedagogic exercises in school curriculum (Rao 2010).

3.4 Psychology of Consciousness in Sāṁkhya-Yoga

Sāṁkhya and Yoga are twin philosophical systems included under the rubric of *ṣaḍ-darśanas*, the six Hindu systems. Sāṁkhya *is* the oldest of them all. As orthodox systems, Sāṁkhya and Yoga owe their allegiance to and accept the authority of the Vedas and are in turn criticized by thinkers belonging to other systems, such as Śaṅkara, for being inconsistent with Vedas. There is some reason to suspect that, despite the acceptance of Sāṁkhya and Yoga within the orthodox fold, for at least five centuries now, as Ramachandra Rao (1999) observes, "they were the least non-Vedic in their origin and early development. They were probably rooted in the Vrātya-Tantra culture of pre-Vedic period" (p. 7). If such is the case, what now goes in the name of Yoga, following Patañjali and others, is a late arrival. In its early phase, yoga probably represented the practices of Vrātyas and the theory of pre-Īśvarakṛṣṇa Sāṁkhya, as we find in *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Again, as Ramachandra Rao points out, the "relation of Sāṁkhya-Yoga to the two other heterodox systems, Buddhism and Jainism, is too obvious to be ignored and too intimate to be regarded as accidental… Early Buddhism preserved the yogi-ideal of 'nirvāṇa'…. And Jainism based its theory almost entirely on the Sāṁkhya, and practice on the Yoga" (pp. 7–9). Buddha's teacher Ārāḍa-kātama was indeed a scholar in Sāṁkhya. Ramachandra Rao goes further to suggest that from a historical perspective "Sāṁkhya-Yoga and Jainism-Buddhism were derived from a common nucleus that was probably outside the Vedic tradition, at any rate in its early phase" (1999, p. 9).

If one subscribes to the above view, it follows that Sāṁkhya-Yoga is possibly a synthetic system that incorporated in its theory and practices the non-Vedic as well as Vedic traditions. Yoga and Sāṁkhya shared for the most part the primary metaphysical assumptions from the very beginning. Though independently systematized during the *Sūtra* period, they continued to be so closely related that Sāyaṇa-Mādhava (fourteenth century/1978) in his *Sarva-darśana Saṅgraha* describes Yoga as "Pātañjala Sāṁkhya."

Yoga shares with Advaita and Buddhist thinkers the notion that humans are situated in an existential matrix of suffering and that the human endeavor is to overcome and change it. Along with its twin school Sāṁkhya, Yoga sketches a psychological system that is both a theory of human bondage and a practical method to overcome that bondage.

We have here a psychological conception of consciousness and appropriate methods for cultivating it. In Yoga, as in Upaniṣadic thought and Buddhism, we find a basic distinction between two fundamental forms of consciousness—transactional and transcendental forms. Transactional consciousness is empirical consciousness as in *kāmaloka* in Buddhism and *vyāvahārika* realm in Advaita.

The source of both kinds of consciousness in Yoga is *puruṣa. Puruṣa*, like the Brahman in Advaita, is consciousness as-such. It is self-manifesting and self-luminous. It has no content, nor does it have an object one is conscious of. It is apprehended intuitively. It is in principle irreducible to any form or manifestation

of matter. The fundamental difference in the conception of consciousness between Advaita and Sāṁkhya-Yoga schools is that in the former Brahman is one, whereas in the latter the *puruṣas* are multiple. Further, in Advaita, Brahman is the eternal, unchanging sole reality without any duality, whereas in Sāṁkhya-Yoga *prakṛti*, the foundational basis of all material forms, is just as real as *puruṣas.* This recognition in Yoga of the duality of reality in *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* provides a smooth transition from the metaphysical to the psychological conception of consciousness. We refer to Consciousness in the sense of Brahman in Advaita, as mentioned earlier, with capital "C," and *consciousness* in the sense of *puruṣa* in italics.

The awareness we have of the world through sensory mediation is not consciousness as-such. Rather it is a sensorially transformed image, very often imperfect and blemished, illuminated by the reflections of *consciousness* in the mind, which is itself muddled because of a variety of factors. Transcendental consciousness is direct and unmediated, whereas ordinary awareness is mediated by the mind and is therefore indirect and cognitive. However, the goal in both Vedānta and Yoga is to realize transcendental consciousness; and this involves cultivated transcendence of sense-mediated and mind-generated awareness.

The classical description of Sāṁkhya-Yoga conception of *consciousness* is given in Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṁkhya Kārikā.* Though we find the word *puruṣa* in *Ṛg* and *Atharva* Vedas and the Upaniṣads, in Sāṁkhya and Yoga *puruṣa* has a special meaning. The earliest meaning of *puruṣa* in the Vedas refers to mortal male. It also refers to cosmic man. In the Upaniṣads, it is used as more or less synonymous with *ātman* (Larson 1979/2011). In the Sāṁkhya-Yoga tradition, it has come to mean consciousness as-such, pure consciousness. *Puruṣa* is described in *Kārikā* III as that which neither creates nor is created. Further, it is said that it is neither *vyakta* nor *avyakta*, which means that it is not composed of the three elements that constitute *prakṛti*. In other words, it is immaterial and distinct from the manifest or unmanifest material world (*Kārikā* XI). *Kārikā* XIX describes *puruṣa* as a witness, free, indifferent, and inactive spectator.

If *puruṣa* is thus completely separate from the *prakṛti* and its manifestations and is not a part of the world we participate in, why is it necessary to assume its existence? What purpose does it serve? The main reason, according to Sāṁkhya-Yoga, is that without postulating *puruṣa's* existence it is difficult to make sense of our psychological being. *Kārikā* XVII states that, subjectivity, the ability to discriminate and differentiate, and freedom observed in one's experience cannot be accounted for in terms of the three *guṇas.* Further, we need to postulate an agent to whom they belong, an agent (*bhoktā*) to whom the experience of enjoyment, etc., can be related, and an agent to whom the executive power can be attributed.

Now, *puruṣa* as an agency of consciousness in human functioning cannot be a single all pervading source for all because subjectivity and freedom presuppose individuality. Consequently, we find in Sāṁkhya-Yoga tradition, there is not a single *puruṣa*, like the Brahman, but a plurality of them. Here then is the transition from the metaphysical conception to a psychological representation of *consciousness* from the absolute to individual. This transition is not without its problems. Śaṅkara, for example, directs his most severe and choicest criticism at the Sāṁkhya notion of *puruṣas*, as we will shortly discuss.

In *Kārikā* XVIII, we find the reasons for postulating the plurality of *puruṣas.* First, there is plurality of births, deaths, etc. If there is just one *puruṣa* such diversity among people is precluded. Second, one's actions and functions take place at different times and there is no simultaneity of them. This requires multiple agents to whom they can be ascribed. Finally, the manifest differences in the proportion of *guṇa*s we find in different objects of the world, which are believed to exist to serve the *puruṣa*, presuppose that they are meant to serve different *puruṣas*. At the same time, we may recall that *puruṣa* is conceived as pure consciousness, indifferent, inactive spectator, and not a participant in what goes on in the world. This requires that we consider *puruṣa* as an individual center of consciousness but not as a subject or person. As Larson (1979/2011) rightly observes, the *puruṣa* as-such "is apart from all knowledge, emotion and self-awareness. It is likewise apart from all action and willing … it is simply a witness, spectator" (p. 171). In other words, it would seem that the *puruṣa* is not an agency of the kind we normally think, but merely a spectator to whom the feelings, actions, etc., are attributed. He is not an agent, but seen as an agent.

Such an interpretation raises several formidable issues and Śaṅkara's critique of Sāṁkhya capitalizes on them. It would be helpful to consider first the relation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* and the interplay between them before moving on to Śaṅkara's criticism of the Sāṁkhya doctrine of *puruṣas.*

A fundamental point we need to keep in mind in this context is that in the Sāṁkhya-Yoga tradition, there is no interaction between consciousness (*puruṣa*) and the material world of *prakṛti*. The relation between them is one of association by proximity. It is often misconstrued that *puruṣa* is bound to *prakṛti* and that salvation or liberation (*kaivalya*) consists in freeing the *puruṣa* from such bondage. The notion of the multiplicity of *puruṣas* is taken as lending some kind of credence to this view. However, such an interpretation is quite contrary to the very spirit of Sāṁkhya-Yoga dualism. *Kārika* LXII categorically asserts about *puruṣa* that "no one is bound, no one released." It is *prakṛti* which is bound and released. Though *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are constantly in close proximity with each other, they never interact with each other. This notion avoids the Cartesian pitfall of mind–body interaction. As Larson (1979/2011) aptly remarks, *puruṣa* "is not a thing of the manifest world, but rather a presence in the midst of the world. The *puruṣa* is *in* the world but not *of* the world" (p. 173).

Even though there is no causal interaction between the two, the proximity of *puruṣa*, makes a profound difference to *prakṛti*. The proximity enables the *prakṛti* to bask in the illumination of the *puruṣa* reflected on it. These reflections bestow subjectivity and generate knowledge and awareness of one's feelings and actions. The result of the association between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is described in *Kārika* XX thus:

> Because of the association of the two – *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* – the unconscious one [*prakṛti*] appears as if characterized by consciousness. Similarly the indifferent one [*puruṣa*] appears as if characterized by activity, because of the activities of the three *guṇas.*

It is interesting that Īśvarakṛṣṇa or the commentators on the *Kārikās* do not mention and discuss about the origin of association between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. It is simply noted that the association exists from the beginning. Nor do they consider

it necessary to explain how the two come together. Much of the effort goes into explaining how they can be disentangled in a state of *kaivalya*, which is described as the liberation of *puruṣa* from the barricades of the material world. Since the *puruṣa* is never bound to begin with, such an interpretation does not appear to be prima facie plausible. In order to make this line of argument a bit more intelligible, it is suggested, the perception that *puruṣas* are bound and released and the activity attributed to it are only appearances and not real. Similarly, the consciousness attributed to the mind is also merely an appearance—an illusion that would disappear with the dawn of discriminative knowledge. This kind of an interpretation is essentially a response to what may be called the "Cartasian trap." All these means is that there is a seeming interaction between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* which is not real in the final analysis. However, further questions arise as to who is the one who has the illusion and who ultimately realizes the illusion and has discriminative knowledge. Clearly, it cannot be the *puruṣa*. Nor such knowledge can be attributed to the *prakṛti* and its manifestations.

Kārikā XXI addresses the purpose served by the association of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. We are told that the "association of the two, which is like that of a blind man and a lame man, is for the purpose of seeing the *pradhāna* (*prakṛti*) and for the purpose of the isolation of the *puruṣa*—from this creation proceeds." The lame *puruṣa* and the blind *prakṛti* thus complement each other in the process of evolution.

It would seem that much of the interpretation of the association between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is metaphorical. *Prakṛti*, the female partner of the couple, is attracted by the male *puruṣa* and the latter is trapped and gets tangled in a relationship that binds him to *prakṛti*. Because of her association with *puruṣa*, *prakṛti* gives birth to the manifest word. The whole process is seen as *prakṛti* serving the needs of *puruṣa.* With this situation regarded as a matrix of human suffering, the pursuit becomes one of disentangling the *puruṣa* from this association. Metaphorically, this explanation appears interesting. However, logically it is untenable for the simple reason that the association actually becomes now an interaction, which is precluded by the fact of the qualitative difference in the nature of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* that is presumed exist.

The relation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is possibly more subtle and profound than what the above metaphor suggests. First, let us stick with the notion that *puruṣa* is consciousness as-such. It is the foundational source of all knowledge. It is of the nature of light that illumines the things with which it comes to be associated. In order that the illumination is reflected and registered on a material object, the object should be such that it is sufficiently subtle to function as a reflecting source. In the human condition this function is served by the mind and more precisely, the *buddhi* aspect of it with its dominant quality of *sattva.*

The association is then between *puruṣa* and the mind; the relationship is one of the former's reflections in the mind. The association between the two gives rise to the manifestation of the person (*jīva*). The person is neither *prakṛti* nor *puruṣa*. She is a creation of their association and it manifests some of the features of *puruṣa* as well as those of the mind. What is trapped here is not consciousness as-such, but the person who is now confused as *puruṣa* itself. The entanglement resulting in the

manifestation of person is the source of the conflation of *puruṣa* and *jīva*. The pursuit of salvation consists in clearing the confusion and realizing that the person is not *puruṣa* and that the latter is very different from and transcendent to it. There is more to this than the mere recognition of the fact that the two are different. It would seem that such recognition becomes possible only when the person has an unblemished reflection of *consciousness* in her mind and thus participates in consciousness as-such and is thus able to access it (for further discussion see Rao 2011b).

Buddhi itself, an evolute of *prakṛti*, is constituted by a combination of the three primary elements, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas.* It is the *sattva* component that has a special relationship with *puruṣa*. It is that which is exposed to the illumination of *puruṣa* and is able to reflect it. However, the *rajas* and *tamas* components of *buddhi* blemish, bias, obscure, and suppress the reflections. Therefore, in order to have true reflections, it is necessary to control and neutralize the influence of *rajas* and *tamas* on the *buddhi*. The entire process of yogic exercises and other methods of reaching a state of *kaivalya* (liberation) is an effort to tame and render the *rajas* and *tamas* impotent and inoperative in the mind. When this is successfully accomplished, the person with her *sāttvic* mind is able to bask in the true illumination of the *puruṣa* and reflect it in an unblemished manner. When this happens, the person participates in consciousness as-such and is able to access it without distortions and contortions. We, therefore, read in the *Yoga-Sūtras* (III.55) that the purity of *sattva* in *buddhi* is equal to *puruṣa* in the state of *kaivalya*, which means that the reflections of *buddhi*, the images of *puruṣa* in the mind, are nearly perfect and the knowledge they generate is apodictically true.

It would seem more reasonable to think that the so-called "seer" (*draṣṭā*), the percipient subject, in Yoga refers to the person and not the *puruṣa*. It is the person, who is bound, enjoys, and suffers, and who is to be released by the dissolution of the association between *puruṣa* and the *buddhi*, which to begin with is the occasion that gives rise to the person. Such an interpretation essentially solves many of the puzzles and paradoxes thrown open in Sāṁkhya-Yoga conception of *puruṣa* and its interaction with *prakṛti*. It, however, strikes at the root of the doctrine of plurality of *puruṣas* advocated by Sāṁkhya-Yoga thinkers. It is so because the individuality now belongs to person and not to the *puruṣa.* The same *puruṣa*, like *Brahman*, can manifest as different *jīvas* (persons). While our interpretation would help overcome the paradox of saying that *puruṣa* is individual and yet lacks personal identity, it cuts at the very root of the reason to postulate the multiplicity of *puruṣas.* At the same time, it brings Advaita and Sāṁkhya-Yoga a lot closer in their conception of consciousness.

Now, we may examine this issue from the perspective of Śaṅkara's critique of Sāṁkhya. Śaṅkara directs his severest and thorough going criticism against Sāṁkhya among all systems despite the fact that in many ways Advaita and Sāṁkhya are closer. This makes Śaṅkara's Sāṁkhya critique interesting to both the critics and followers of Sāṁkhya alike.

Śaṅkara argues that Sāṁkhya conception of *prakṛti* and its manifestation as the material world of objects is (a) contrary to the primary assertions of *Śruti*, the statements we find in the Vedas, (b) inconsistent with the *Smṛti*, the Hindu tradition,

and (c) fallacious on rational grounds (*tarka*). The arguments relating to (a) and (b) are interesting and in some ways very forceful; However, the rational arguments against Sāṁkhya dualism are of special interest for our purpose. We find these in Śaṅkara's (1980) commentary on *Brahma-Sūtra* (II, 2.1–10).

There are at least six specific arguments by Śaṅkara against Sāṁkhya dualism. The most important of them harp on the assumption that *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* as two separate, independent entities and that the *prakṛti* is the material cause of the physical manifestations of the world like jars and tables as well as psychological phenomena like pain and pleasure. Śaṅkara raises the question, how the unconscious *pradhāna* (*prakṛti*) can be the cause of the objects like jar and feelings like pleasure. Just as there is need for a potter to make a jar out of clay, there must be an intelligent principle/agent behind the manifestations in the world. It cannot be *prakṛti* because it is by its very nature an unconscious entity. It cannot be *puruṣa* either because *puruṣa* is completely outside of *prakṛti* and does not interact with the latter.

Also, the three *guṇas—sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—are believed to be in an equilibrium in the beginning. How is this equilibrium disturbed? Again, *puruṣa* may not be held responsible for this for the simple reason that it is outside of and does not interact with *prakṛti*. Further, the notion that *prakṛti* through its manifestations provides enjoyment to *puruṣa* is untenable because *puruṣa* by its very nature is incapable of experiencing such enjoyment.

Śaṅkara's most compelling argument against Sāṁkhya centers on the basic incompatibility between the two ontologically distinct *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. How can such radically distinct entities possibly influence each other without an interaction that is conceded as nonexistent? Again, such radical dualism of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* leaves no room for bondage and release of *puruṣa* as envisaged in Sāṁkhya.

It is interesting that Śaṅkara does not attempt a rational refutation of the notion of multiplicity of *puruṣas*, which is clearly inconsistent with his conception of *Brahman*, and limits his rational arguments to rejecting duality of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti.* The doctrine of plurality of *puruṣas* is rejected on the ground that it has no basis in *Śruti* (Larson 1979/2011).

The difference between Advaita and Sāṁkhya at the ontological level is thus the main source of the conflict. The passionate commitment to their respective positions prevents them from seeing significant commonalities at the psychological level. It would seem that the following restructuring may help us to develop a psychological model of *consciousness* equally applicable to Advaita and Sāṁkhya-Yoga systems. The main issue is the radically distinct nature of *consciousness* (*Brahman, puruṣa*) and the world of matter (*prakṛti, māyā*). How does *consciousness* manifest in the material world? How does inactive and indifferent *consciousness* get involved with unconscious matter and enable material objects display consciousness? This is the challenge. Indian psychology based on Yoga and Advaita has some plausible answers.

In the Indian tradition, let us recall, the interaction between mind and body is not a problem, because both of them are material. Śaṅkara and Sāṁkhya share the same view even though they differ on the ontological status of matter. From the psychological perspective, the ontological issues are of secondary concern. The duality

or lack of it in the Indian tradition is not that of matter and mind. Rather it is the duality between consciousness and matter, and the latter includes the mind. Therefore, we need to explain the psychophysical interaction at two levels—between consciousness and mind and between mind and body. In order to explain the two-level interaction, it is necessary to postulate the notion of person (*jīva*) as a psychophysical construct that has a liaison with consciousness as well as the body. Both Advaita and Sāṁkhya systems are not inconsistent with such a concept. In fact, Advaita does conceive of *jīva*; and Yoga appears to conflate *jīva* and *puruṣa* leading to a number of avoidable paradoxes and contradictions, as we pointed out earlier.

Now, both Advaita and Sāṁkhya-Yoga share the assumption that consciousness *as-such* does not interact with mind/body; but consciousness does manifest in a variety of forms in human experience. The problem is therefore one of explaining manifest consciousness in the world. It follows there are two kinds of consciousness, *consciousness as-such* and manifest consciousness. In some ways, the two are utterly different. Consciousness as-such (*puruṣa* or *Brahman*) is contentless and nonintentional. The manifest, phenomenal consciousness, however, is intentional and has content. In a sense, the manifest consciousness is other than itself, and yet it is something different and distinct from the world of objects. From the perspective of Śaṅkara, the knowledge revealed in *Śrutis* is different from cognitive consciousness manifest in the acts of knowing, feeling, and acting of the person. Thus, while Śaṅkara denies ontological dualism, his system implies epistemological dualism—two kinds of radically distinct ways of knowing. Again, we have the same problem reconciling the two modes of knowing. The model of the person we discussed appears to address this matter and provide some clarity to the issue (see Rao 2011b for a more detailed discussion).

The person, as we pointed out, is a unique composite of consciousness, mind, and body. The mind of the person, more precisely the *buddhi*, has the unique ability to reflect consciousness. In virtue of such reflections, the *vṛtti*s in the mind are illumined. The *vṛtti*s involve the sensorially processed information emanating from the world of objects. Now, cognitive consciousness is consciousness manifesting as illumination of the *vṛtti*s, which provide the content. It is the *sattva* element capable of reflecting consciousness that bestows cognitive awareness on the content provided by the senses. However, the *buddhi* is generally muddled because it is saddled by *rajas* and *tamas*, the distorting aspects that prevent *sattva* from providing a true reflection and give instead sensorially muddled awareness.

According to Yoga, it is possible to progressively control and even eliminate/neutralize the influence of *rajas* and *tamas* on the *buddhi*. When this happens and *sattva* of the *buddhi* is on its own, it is able to access consciousness as-such in its reflections. This is the state of intuitive awareness, the kind of realization that is incorporated in *Śruti* statements. Śaṅkara has no quarrel with Yoga and its practices presumed to give extraordinary knowledge and abilities. He explicitly accepts them.

In this formulation, we focus on the two levels of knowing instead of two levels of being unlike in Advaita. *Consciousness* is said to be present in the person as a witness (*sākṣin*). *Sākṣitvam* (being a witness) only refers here to the ubiquitous

presence of consciousness. Witness does not imply the involvement or activity of an agent. Again, the material world of objects, the manifestations of *prakṛti* are not for the sake of *puruṣa*. They happen because of *puruṣa.* It is the reflections of *puruṣa* that stir the process of change and becoming. *Buddhi* receives the reflections and the person reacts to them, initiating the change to follow. How the evolutionary process was originally started, we may not know. We may be cognitively closed to it, because mind is a later evolute.

In the next chapter on mind and body, we will discuss in more detail the psychological processes of the mind in its relation to the body. We note presently that consciousness is radically different from the mind. In itself, it has no content. It is indifferent and inactive, and as-such it does not interact with anything outside of it. Its presence is ubiquitous. By its presence, the *vṛttis* in the mind are illuminated and the person receives the reflections of consciousness. With the illumination of *vṛttis* processed in the mind, the person has cognitive awareness. Cognitive consciousness is different from consciousness as-such in that the former has sensory content. Cognitive consciousness is different from *vṛttis* as-such in that they become subjective in virtue of their association with *consciousness*. Also, in association with *ahaṁkāra* aspect of the mind there arises self-reference.

It is possible for the mind, however, to bask in the illumination of *consciousness* without the involvement of *vṛtti*s. This results in accessing consciousness as-such, giving rise to intuitive realization of truth. Though, the intuitions do not contain sensorially processed content, they may be translated subsequently into sensory idiom for purposes of communication. This appears to be the case with *Śruti* statements and why certain authority is vested in them. To conclude, then, there are two ways of knowing—sensory and intuitive, transactional and transcendental. The person has access to both. The two ways of knowing lead us to conceive consciousness at two levels—cognitive consciousness, consciousness manifesting via *vṛttis* and consciousness as-such, accessed intuitively.

3.5 Concluding Comments

Consciousness is thus the key concept that distinguishes Indian psychology from other psychologies. Though it is the key, the central concept, however, is the person. The key for understanding the person is consciousness. It is interesting that it is the case, despite the fact that (a) the person does not figure in any prominent way in Yoga; (b) it has only secondary reality in AdvaitaVedānta; and (c) in Buddhism, it is at best conceptually real, if not downright imaginary. Again, person as we have seen is the central concept that brings about the similarity between different facets of Indian psychological thought and binds them together in a coherent system we may call Indian psychology.

Now, what are the implications of this model and how is it different from the currently dominant psychological thought? We will discuss these matters in some detail at the end of the next chapter on the mind, when we will be in a position to

fully appreciate the functioning of the person as a composite of body, mind, and consciousness. For the present, we may note that *consciousness* as conceived in Indian psychology is simply something that has no room in psychology as it is studied today. *Consciousness* as an irreducible principle of reality is generally considered nonexistent. If it does exist, it is believed that it falls outside the scope of psychology. The fact of recognizing its existence and role in human functioning would have several significant implications to psychology. First and foremost, it enhances the scope of psychology which is severely limited by the cerebrocentric model of the person that currently holds sway among psychologists.

Extension of the connotation of consciousness to include consciousness as-such, pure consciousness without sensory content, gives rise to the recognition of two aspects of consciousness—transcendental and transactional—and two ways of knowing—sensory and nonsensory modes. It leaves room for studying among other things extraordinary human experience and exceptional human abilities that are ignored in current psychological discussion because they do not make much sense from the perspective of the model that excludes consciousness as-such as a genuine state. Spiritual pursuit makes sense with the above-extended meaning of consciousness. Some of the gray areas in-between such as genius, creativity, and freedom find their legitimate place in the architecture of human functioning.

The extended connotation of consciousness to include pure conscious states does not necessarily imply a downright rejection of Western psychology. It may be seen as a legitimate extension of it, if we do not artificially draw boundaries and erect walls separating them. We find in William James, for example, such an inclusive system, which is somewhat blemished by an unholy focus on differences rather than their complementarity. We refer here to the two distinct conceptions of consciousness in the two celebrated books of William James—*Principles of Psychology* (1890/1983) and *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902/1914). In his *Principles*, James described consciousness as personal, changing and yet continuous, selective, noetic, and unified, which flows like a stream. Here he was dealing with empirical consciousness. This description has an uncanny resemblance to Buddhist account of consciousness in *kāmaloka* as we noted. In the *Varieties*, James extends the scope of consciousness to include what he calls "nonrational forms" of consciousness, referring to mystical and other extraordinary experiences. Here the stream metaphor gives way to "mother sea." Again we find in Thervāda conception of *bhavaṅga*, the *ālaya-vijñāna* of Yogācāra thinkers, and consciousness in *rūpa*, *arūpa*, and *lokuttara* realms similar transrational forms of consciousness as James conceived. In fact, the Yogācāra thinkers use the metaphor of sea and waves to describe *ālaya* consciousness.

It is interesting to note that in his *Essays on Radical Empiricism* James (1912/1938) is troubled by the multiple connotations of consciousness and his apparent inability to reconcile them. He wondered whether "the hour is ripe for it [consciousness] to be openly and universally discarded" (p. 3). However, in the Indian tradition, no such irreconcilable gulf between the two forms of consciousness is felt. Buddhists are comfortable in postulating four different planes of consciousness; Advaitins see no problem in postulating two ways of knowing in

transcendental and empirical realms. The Advaita notions of *vidyā* and *avidyā* discussed in Chap. 2 is very relevant here. According to *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad, vidyā* is knowledge about things permanent and unchanging like the *Brahman*, which is experienced in the transcendental state of pure consciousness. *Avidyā* is not ignorance. It is knowledge about the phenomenal world that is ever-changing. It is knowledge that is fallible open to revision and therefore tentative. Although *vidyā* occupies a special and privileged position in Indian epistemology, as the above-mentioned Upaniṣad notes, lack of *avidyā* can be more ruinous than lack of *vidyā* because in the case of former one is simply unable to function adequately in the empirical world and deal appropriately with practical problems. As we have noted, there is room in Yoga for achieving excellence in sensory knowing as well as for accessing consciousness as-such.

As we conclude this chapter on consciousness, it may be helpful to be clear once again about the two related concepts "consciousness" and the "self" and the different senses they convey. The Upaniṣadic conception of the *Brahman* is that it is Consciousness; and at the same time it is the Supreme Self. Here Consciousness and Self are equated. This does not create any problem as long as Consciousness and Self are considered in their most abstract and universal form. However, at the level of the individual, the equivocation of the two may lead to some serious conceptual problems. Self in the person is considered not merely as consciousness but also as the center/agent of that consciousness, who experiences awareness in a variety of forms. Thus, we have three possible levels of the self—(1) "Supreme Self," absolute and universal (as *Brahman* in Advaita), (2) "*self*" referring to consciousness as-such, at the level of the individual without an agentic role (as in *puruṣa*) in Sāṁkhya-Yoga; *ātman* or *jīvasakṣin* in Vedanta, and (3) "self" in the person who wills, acts, and feels (the *jīva* or the empirical self). In order to indicate the specific sense, we may write Self with capital "S" to refer to *Brahman*, *Ātman*, or the Supreme Self. In the sense of consciousness as-such, nonagentic consciousness, we may italicize the "*self*". In the sense of empirical self in the person, we may simply use the lower case "s" in "self" without italicizing it. We may also use "self" in a general nonspecific sense to refer to self at all its levels, where a distinction is not warranted. We will discuss these issues further in Chap. 6 that deals with the person and the self in some more detail.

Chapter 4
Mind–Body Complex

The core of Indian psychological tradition, as we noted, is one of understanding the person and the existential anguish experienced by her. The person as mentioned is a composite of consciousness, mind, and body. Of these mind occupies the central and pivotal position connecting consciousness at one end and body at the other in a linear and not a triangular relationship. The goal of Indian psychology is to help raise humans to higher levels of being and toward excellence in knowing, feeling, and doing. This in a significant sense consists in moving progressively away from body-centredness with greater focus on realizing consciousness as-such as the goal. In this context, the mind is a crucial factor. Its study is important and central to Indian psychology because it is both the source of the existential anguish and the necessary resource to liberate the person from that anguish and enable her to achieve the sought-after-state of perfection and self-realization.

4.1 Mind in Indian Psychology

The concept of mind in Indian psychology from the Vedic times to Sri Aurobindo, through the different systems of classical Indian philosophy, has undergone a variety of interpretations, reflecting varied ontological positions of concerned thinkers, and the changing sociocultural context. However, we find amidst a great mix of interpretations a core notion shared by most serious thinkers. We will focus on this in this chapter and briefly sketch the contours covered by Indian thinkers from the Vedic times to the present with the objective of distilling the basic content of the notion of the mind in Indian thought. This is an exercise to draw a cogent conceptual map of the mind in the Indian tradition and examine the respects in which it differs from the one borrowed from the Western tradition. The aim is not one of discrediting one approach in favor of the other, but to explore the ways they could possibly complement each other, learning from their strengths and weaknesses.

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4.1.1 Vedic Conception of the Mind

The double role of the mind, both a boon and a burden to the person, was presaged in *Ṛg Veda* itself. We find in *Ṛg Veda*, "What thing I truly am I know not clearly; mysterious, fettered in my mind I wander" (*Ṛg Veda*, 1.164.37) (see Griffth and Shastri 1973). Thus, the mind is seen as clouding consciousness. At the same time, the mind is also considered as the necessary support system to sustain life. "O Asuniti, keep the soul within us, and make the days we have to live yet longer." (*Ṛg Veda*, 10.59.5). The double role of the mind as the agent of existential anguish and also as the saving instrument that could lead one away from *samsāra* to salvation, an obstacle as well as an aid to achieve liberation, is explicitly stated in *Brahma Bindu Upaniṣhad*.

> The *manas* therefore is the cause.
> Of bondage and liberation to us:
> Of bondage, when attached to object,
> Of liberation, when free from it.
> (Verse #2, Deussen 1883/1987, p. 687)

Classical Hindu texts describe a variety of ways of freeing oneself from the bondage and achieving liberation. For example, describing the characteristics of *sthitaprajña*, *Bhagavad Gītā* points to different ways of steadying and controlling the mind. "When a man dwells in his mind on the objects of sense, attachment to them is produced. From attachment springs desire and from desire comes anger. From anger arises bewilderment, from bewilderment loss of memory; and from loss of memory, the destruction of intelligence; and from destruction of intelligence he perishes. But a man of disciplined mind, who moves among the objects of sense, with the senses under control and free from attachment and aversion, he attains purity of spirit" (2.62–64). "He who abandons all desires and acts free from longing, without any sense of mineness or egoism, he attains peace" (2.71, quoted from Radhakrishnan 1948a).

The various accounts of the mind in Vedic thought, including the Upaniṣads, admittedly do not present a coherent philosophy of mind. However, there are ideas that are pregnant with important implication for subsequent development of systematic thought in various *darśana*s. Indeed, the Vedic ideas were the seeds that sprouted during the *Sūtra* period and grown later in the commentaries on the *sūtras* of different philosophical systems. These include the conception that the mind is nonconscious (*acetana*) and that it is in some respects physical and is qualitatively different from consciousness as-such. We find sufficient hints suggesting that the mind is an instrument and an intermediary between the body and consciousness in human condition. Further, mind is seen as consisting of three dimensions—(1) cognitive, (2) emotive, and (3) volitional. Different terms are used to refer to mind and these have come to be seen as different levels of functioning of the mind. More importantly, mind in the human condition is considered the means of bondage and at the same it is also seen as an instrument of liberation. Consequently, the mind is

regarded as central to human quest for freedom and perfection; and it thus becomes the core concept in Indian psychology from the very beginning.

Systematic philosophies of mind are found in the six orthodox Hindu systems as well as in Jainism and the different schools of Buddhist thought. In fact the discussion of the concept of mind spills over into the indigenous medical systems such as Āyurveda represented by the physician Caraka and the surgeon Suśruta who lived before Christ. It is likely that most of them were influenced by the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. There is also reason to think that the influence goes beyond the Vedic tradition to prehistoric times, Sāṁkhya and Yoga themselves may have pre-Vedic roots; and Jainism and Buddhism are influenced to some degree by early Sāṁkhya ideas and yoga practices, as we already noted.

4.1.2 Sāṁkhya Yoga Conception of Mind

As mentioned earlier, Sāṁkhya and Yoga hold that *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are the two basic principles of reality that govern our being. *Puruṣa* as-such is undifferentiated consciousness; and *prakṛti* is the foundational source of all material manifestations, including the mind. They are thus the "soul and substance" of the universe (Bernard 1947), the subjectivity, and objectivity in our being. The manifest world of objects has evolved out of *prakṛti*. What role *puruṣa* plays in the evolutionary process is not clear; but it is assumed that without *puruṣa* the process could not have started and would not continue. *Prakṛti* in its primordial condition with its three constituents—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* is in a state of perfect balance and equilibrium. Somehow, this equilibrium was disturbed; and the process of evolution started. Once the equipoise state is disturbed, each *guṇa* competes with the others for dominance and the result is a process of evolution and the manifest world of one's experience.

The Sāṁkhya system presents a view of *evolution* in nature. Consistent with the Vedic view of the something "One" at the beginning of the universe proceeding to manifest into the multitude of things, the Sāṁkhya suggests a series of changes that putatively resulted into the creation of countless atoms of which things are constituted. The Sāṁkhya system conceives of five basic types of atoms called *tanmātra*s which correspond to the five senses such as auditory and visual *tanmātra*s and so forth. In other words, the atomic constituents of nature are thought to have a conscious experiential aspect as well as a physical one. The point here is not to seek the evidence for the existence of the *tanmātra*s, but to recognize that the physical and the mental are thought to be integral aspects of nature according to the Sāṁkhya world view.

The above Sāṁkhya view is similar to Leibnitz's idea of *monads*, which he conceived of as fundamental units of nature that are both spatially extended as well as psychically aware. Leibnitz proposed this idea since he was opposed to Descartes' radical separation of spatially extended matter and unextended mind. The Sāṁkhyan and Leibnitzian views are alike in conceiving of degrees of

consciousness spread out in nature throughout the plant and animal kingdoms. The rejection of such a view following the Cartesian mind-matter dichotomy has landed us into the intractable "mind–body problem"—a problem from which Western psychology has been unable to escape. The Sāṁkhyan dualism is significantly different from Cartesian dualism insofar as *puruṣa* manifests pure consciousness experienced in the Fourth State and not mental events experienced in the states of wakefulness and dreaming.

The first to evolve out of the primordial *prakṛti* is *mahat*, which literally means the great one. If *prakṛti* is the ground, *mahat* is the first figure that emerges. It is itself somewhat vague and undifferentiated. *Mahat* is a kind of cosmic intellect and the ground condition of all knowledge. It is *Buddhi* at large, a concatenation of all individual *buddhis* to emerge.

Buddhi has a special and unique role in that it is the one that makes the connection between *puruṣa* and the objective world of *prakṛti* possible, which are otherwise totally disparate and mutually exclusive. *Buddhi* is so predominantly *sattvic* and translucent that it can catch the reflections of *puruṣa*. Perhaps, it is because of this affinity between the two that *Mahat* is considered to be the first to evolve out of *prakṛti*. It is the reflection of *puruṣa* in *buddhi* that bestows the quality of consciousness to one's experience. Further, the reflection engenders a sense of identity and the emergence of empirical self as the core condition of the person and enables him to have subjective experiences.

Mahat is possibly the subtlest of all matter. It is nonlocal in that it is not extended in space and is imperceptible. As Rao (1999) calls to our attention, Pañchaśikha, quoted in Vyāsa's *Sāṁkhya-pravacana-bhāṣya*, considers *mahat* as "mere 'I-ness' (*asmīti-mātra*); it is the subjective counterpart of the objective 'mere i-ness' (*tan-mātra*) of things" (p. 32). It functions in the role of the intermediary between *consciousness* and the world of physical objects by reflecting *puruṣa* and engendering subjective experience of the objects. There is thus a qualitative transformation in the *buddhi* because of *puruṣa's* reflections. This leads to the emergence of phenomenal self, which is the image of the *puruṣa* reflected in the *buddhi*. It is this "reflex image" that is the core of the person behind all manifest experiences.

While the *buddhi* is predominantly *sāttvic* and therefore the knowledge base of the person, its minor component *rajas* begins to assert itself and causes the *buddhi* to act. In this process there arises the ego (*ahaṁkāra*). The *buddhi*, the "mere I-ness", the indeterminate and undifferentiated, becomes determined and structured as an individual with an ego. In the ego, the *rājasic* element asserts itself over the *sāttvic*, and the person tends to crave, desire, and involve in action and enjoy or suffer its consequences. The ego, however, is not an entity but a process, according to Sāṁkhya. In association with the body, *ahaṁkāra* initiates the process of individuation, gives identity to the psychophysical framework of the person. *Manas* and *indriya*s are the evolutes of *ahaṁkāra*. *Manas* is the central processer. *Indriya*s refer to the sensory-motor apparatus.

The connecting link between the ego and the sensory functions is the *manas*, which processes the sensory inputs. *Buddhi*, *ahaṁkāra,* and the *manas* together

constitute, what is called in Sāṁkhya Yoga, the *citta* or the *antaḥkaraṇa*. The *antaḥkaraṇa*, the internal instrument, corresponds to what we may call the mind. The *citta* along with the senses and associated physical structures of the body constitute the person. The person is a fully differentiated functioning individual who is engaged in the processes of knowing, feeling, and acting. She is the agent who displays *rāga* and *dveṣa*, the tendencies to attach and approach on the one hand and to hate and withdraw on the other.

According to Sāṁkhya Yoga, the way the person is constituted to participate in the phenomenal world in the process of evolution is primarily pain-provoking. It is so because it is prone to error and clouding of consciousness (*avidyā*). It involves ego indulgence. It leads to attachment (*rāga*) and *aversion* (*dveṣa*), and engenders will to live (*abhiniveśa*) and the consequent urge to preserve oneself at all costs. Inherent altruism gives way to manifest 'selfishness'. All these lead the person to attachment, aspiration, ego dominance; and consequently, she experiences anxiety, fear, and frustration and thus suffers the pain of existence. This led the Sāṁkhya Yoga thinkers to cogitate on the causes of the existential predicament of suffering, and creatively come up with curative procedures for redressing the situation and help lead the person away from suffering to happiness and bliss. The eight-step process of Patañjali Yoga is an exercise in that direction.

The ego-driven involvement in the world of objects and its mistaken identity with true *self* and the clouding of consciousness due to the built-in biases of the cognising instruments are the prime sources of suffering. They can be overcome by cultivating detachment, controlling the wanderings of the mind, and promoting freedom from the constraints of phenomenal existence. Suffering is indeed inherent in the evolutionary process of unfoldment of phenomenal existence in the manifold manifestations of *prakṛti*. The cure for suffering engendered by this unfoldment and individuation is to reverse the direction from evolution to involution, from the process of unfoldment to the process of enfoldment. This involves progressive detachment from fruits of one's actions and reverse travel as it were to the original state of *buddhi* unperturbed by the *rājasic* drives and not clouded by *tamas*. In the words of Ramachandra Rao, "a backward process of attention, closing in, and turning back of the consciousness into an undifferentiated mass (*samādhi*). The world then becomes a mere 'is', the individual a bare 'am'" (1999, p. 38).

As may be seen, the above account is a mix of ontology, psychology, and ethics, a mix that is likely to confuse the student of psychology, whose main interest is in understanding the psychophysical complex that drives the person to act and experience the way she does in her behavioral participation in the world. It is important to note in this context that psychological thought in the Indian tradition is intimately intertwined with ethics. Psychology is a science; but it is not value-free. We may to some extent disentangle psychological ideas from their ontological roots; but to free them from the fundamental values is likely to distort them. Keeping this in perspective, we may detail the following as the psychologically relevant conception of the mind in the Sāṁkhya Yoga tradition.

The term for the functional mind in Yoga is *citta*. The *citta* is comprised of not only the cognitive processes and the ego but it also contains instinctual tendencies

inherited from previous lives and the effects of past actions in this life (*vāsanā*s and *saṁskāra*s). The *saṁskāras* and *vāsanās* tend to color one's cognitions and predispose her to behave in certain ways. The *citta* manifests also volitional activity, which enables it to attend to some objects and not to others. In addition, the *citta* has latent power (*śakti*), which can be used to guide and control the course it would take. The *śakti* enables the *citta* to "reflect and react back upon itself and change the passivity of its transformations into active states associated with will and effort" (Dasgupta 1930, pp. 286–287). *Citta* is thus the seat of one's cognition, volition, feelings, and actions.

Three levels of functioning of the *citta* are distinguished—*buddhi*, *ahaṁkāra* (ego function), and *manas*. The *manas* is the central processor, which selectively reflects on the material provided by the senses and determines its character by assimilation and discrimination. The *ahaṁkāra* appropriates what is provided by the *manas* as one's own and considers the object of perception in reference to the perceiving person. The *buddhi* then reacts to the information provided in an appropriate manner. The functions, or processes of the *citta* are described by Vācaspati Miśra thus: "Everyone who deals with an object first intuits it, then reflects upon it, then appropriates it, then resolves 'this is to be done by me', and then proceeds to act" (quoted from Sinha 1934/1958, Vol. 1, p. 121). It should be kept in mind that Yoga does not regard *buddhi*, *ahaṁkāra*, and *manas* as distinct entities or faculties. They are simply the functional aspects of the *citta*. These three functions of the *citta* are collectively referred to as the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*), distinct from the senses regarded as external organs. As stated in the *Sāṁkhya Kārika* (XXXV), the senses are gateways to knowledge and the *citta* functions as the gatekeeper.

As the internal organ, the mind is the interconnecting instrumentality that helps to interface the conscious *puruṣa* with the unconscious objects. The mind is similar as well as different from *puruṣa*. It is different because, first, unlike *puruṣa* it undergoes fluctuations and modifications. Second, the mind has no set goals; it is believed to exist for *puruṣa*. Third, the mind partakes in the world of objects, taking their forms, whereas the *puruṣa* is no more than a witness and does not interact with the objects. The mistaken identity of the mind with *puruṣa*, which with its ego functions as the empirical self, is the result of the reflections of *puruṣa* in *buddhi*. These reflections generate the false apprehension that the states of *buddhi* belong to *puruṣa*. According to Miśra (1969), *puruṣa*'s reflections on the *buddhi* make the latter conscious. However, another Sāṁkhya commentator, Vijñānabhikṣu (1909) suggests that the reflections on *buddhi* reflect back on the *puruṣa* and that such mutual reflection is the reason why the experiences of *buddhi* are mistaken and wrongly attributed to the *puruṣa*.

Cognition: Cognition arises from the threefold functions of mind in relation to an object. The object manifests in the mind as a transformation of *buddhi*. The transformed *buddhi* by itself is nonconscious. Consciousness is bestowed by *puruṣa's* illumination that makes the *buddhi* transparent and the cognition conscious. Thus cognition is literally reflective awareness, a reflection of *puruṣa* on the surface of *buddhi*. In perception, when an external object registers on a peripheral

sense organ (*bāhyendriya*) there is a sensorial transformation of the object. The *manas* attends to these transformations and processes them by assimilation and discrimination. Then, they are presented to *ahaṁkāra* (the ego function) which appropriates them so that the sensory transformations are related to the subject. These are carried to *buddhi* making the *buddhi* assume the form of the object and then react to the object of cognition in an appropriate manner. *Buddhi*, however, is not conscious by itself. It becomes conscious by its association with *puruṣa*. When the light of *puruṣa* shines on *buddhi*, which now has the form of the object in the form of *vṛttis*, *buddhi* in its turn reflects the object so that there is not only conscious awareness of the object, but also that awareness takes a subjective form because of the influence of *ahaṁkāra*. Cognition is thus a transformation of *buddhi*. The *puruṣa* itself is not affected by this just as the sun is not affected by its image in the lake. The role of *puruṣa* is like that of the sun in virtue of which there is light on the moon. If the light of the *puruṣa* is not reflected on *buddhi*, the cognition of the object, the *buddhi* transformation of it, remains unconscious.

Sāṁkhya Yoga provides for unconscious cognitive states. Nontransparent *vṛttis* are the unconscious states of the mind. Their existence in the mind is due to its *tamas* component. *Manas*, *ahaṁkāra,* and *buddhi* are regarded as the three aspects of the internal organ. They are considered superior to the external senses, which are considered subordinate organs. Among the three aspects of the mind *buddhi* is the principal and predominant one. The superiority of one aspect over another is related to its function. *Buddhi* is considered to be the chief instrument in one's cognitive activity because (1) it alone has direct access to *puruṣa* and is capable of becoming conscious in virtue of its predominant *sāttvic* disposition to reflect the *puruṣa*. (2) *Buddhi* is the final point in the knowledge process. (3) It is the storehouse of latent subconscious impressions and tendencies (*saṁskāra*s *and vāsanā*s), which color our cognitions and contain dispositions to act. (4) Finally, recollection is also the function of *buddhi* (Sinha 1958). Such is the importance of *buddhi* in the functioning of the mind (*citta*) that we find Patañjali using the words *citta* and *buddhi* interchangeably in several places in his *Yoga Sūtras*.

4.1.3 Mind in AdvaitaVedānta

The history of the concept of mind (*manas*) in the sources of Advaita can be traced to one of the oldest Upaniṣads, namely the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (1.5.3). According to Radhakrishnan's translation, it says: "Desire, determination, doubt, faith, steadfastness, shame, intellection, fear, all this is truly mind" (1953/1994, p. 175). In the *Chāndogya* (7.3), which is another one of the older and important Upaniṣads, the nature of mind is discussed at some length. According to Radhakrishnan the main point is that the mind "has for its main function determination, decision, choice" (1953/1994, p. 471). Consistent with this view, the common definition of the mind in the Advaita tradition is that it mainly involves decision and indecision (*saṁkalpa vikalpātmakaṁ manaḥ*). The key terms here, *saṁkalpa* and *vikalpa*, are derived

from a common root verb *klṛip*. According to the Monier Williams Dictionary, this root verb has several related connotations including to frame, form, invent, compose, arrange, or imagine. With the addition of prefixes *saṁ* and *vi* which, respectively, mean togetherness and separation, *saṁkalpa* implies bringing ideas together, to synthesize or integrate them, while *vikalpa* means to differentiate among alternative conceptions. To put it in contemporary psychological terms, the mind is seen as involving differentiation and integration, the two most important cognitive processes. Thus, to cognitively construct a given situation in a number of alternative ways is the basic function of the mind: and confusion, indecision, and decision making follow from it. Given the fundamentally processing nature of the mind, it is common in the tradition to speak of *manovṛtti*, as the root verb *vṛt* suggests to turn, move, or go on, thus implying continual movement. The Yogic term *citta vṛtti* is synonymous of the Advaitic term *manovṛtti*, and the two are equally important and foundational concepts in the psychology of, respectively, Sāṁkhya Yoga and the Advaita systems.

Sāṁkhya Yoga conception of mind may be taken to represent broadly the central view in the Indian tradition not withstanding minor differences. This becomes fairly clear when we note that the Advaita conception of the mind is nearly identical with that of Sāṁkhya Yoga, despite the fact Śaṅkara is one of the most articulate critics of Sāṁkhya philosophy. As in Sāṁkhya, mind is the instrument of knowledge, emotion, and volition in Advaita. Again, mind is different from consciousness. In both systems the mind is conceived as going out to the objects to have perceptual experience. The term for the mind in Advaita is *antaḥkaraṇa*. It is the internal instrument that enables one to know, feel, and act. The mind constitutes the totality of mental states and the processes that give rise to them. Both Yoga and AdvaitaVedānta consider mind as physical.

One significant difference between Sāṁkhya Yoga and AdvaitaVedānta in their notion of the mind is that in Advaita consciousness is alone real and that mind is not ultimately real. Its reality is confined only to the illusory phenomenal world (*vyāvahārika sattā*). In Sāṁkhya, both consciousness and mind are real. However, as we have noted earlier, the goal of the person in pursuit of liberation is to achieve a state of mind control by emptying its content. With *kaivalya*, mind enfolds itself in *prakṛti* and dissolves itself. In Advaitic view, anything that undergoes such changes by definition is not ultimately real. Therefore, the difference between the two systems is more in their definition of reality; and that difference is not substantial from psychological perspective.

Notwithstanding the glaring differences in the metaphysical postulations of AdvaitaVedānta and Sāṁkhya Yoga, their views on the nature of mind and the process of perception are thus essentially similar (Sinha 1958). They seem to agree on the major details of how the mind works and how it is able to reflect consciousness to give us awareness in its various forms.

The mind (*antaḥkaraṇa*) in Advaita is described as the internal organ (Dharmarājadhvarīndra 1942). It is the composite of awareness and response systems. As in Yoga, it may be functionally distinguished into (1) the *buddhi* (executive system), (2) *ahaṁkāra*, (self-referencing system), (3) *manas* (central processing

system which is further subdivided at times into *manas* and *citta* in Advaita) connected to the sensory-motor system (*jñāna karma indriyas*). The perceptual process involves the mind (*antaḥkaraṇa* in its *buddhi* function) going out to the object via sensory channels. In perception the *buddhi* makes contact with the object via the sensory channels. This gives rise to modifications in the *buddhi* and *vṛtti*s arise in the mind. *Vṛttis* are processed by the *manas*, which with its selective attention subjects the *vṛttis* to analysis, assimilation, and discrimination. *Vṛtti*s thus become determinate and definitive; and are broken into subject–predicate relationship. This is the process by which the objects are reflectively apprehended. When, at the next stage, *vṛtti*s are appropriated by the *ahaṁkāra*, which is the self-referencing system, they become associated with the person. Then one has the self-apprehension of the objects. With such self-referencing made possible by the *ahaṁkāra* and the determinate form given by the *manas*, *vṛttis* find themselves back in the *buddhi* with all the manifest modifications. Advaita makes a distinction between (a) the *perception of an object* and (b) the *perception of object as object*. The former involves the identity of cognitive (*pramāṇa*) and object consciousness (*viṣaya caitanya*). In the perception of the object as object, there is in addition to the identification of the object, an identification with the person who has that perception. For example, the person identifies that the rose is red, but he also knows that he knows about the redness of the rose. Here the *vṛtti* is referred to and appropriated by the *jīva* (the empirical self). (Dharmarājadhvarīndra 1942, pp. 58–59).

The process of perception in Advaita involves the mind "going out" to the object via senses and taking the form of the object. This way of looking at the perceptual process would sound odd because the commonly held view in psychology is that it is the stimulus object that initiates the perceptual process. The stimulus emanates energy patterns in the form of electromagnetic waves that impinge on the sensory part of the nervous system and arouse a sensation in the brain. Then the person has the perceptual experience of the object. In other words, the flow is from the object to the brain via the sensory system. In Advaita, it is quite the reverse. The mind flows out, as it were, to the object of perception via the senses.

What does it mean to say that the mind flows out to the object? What sense does it make to assume that the mind initiates the perceptual process? It clearly makes little sense to assume that the mind actually travels out to the object leaving the body. The flowing out function of the mind implies no more than the assertion that what is primary in the perceptual process is the person and not the object of perception. It refers to the freedom of the person to choose her own object of perception. Objects with no functioning minds cannot have a choice to choose a relationship with a subject. A subject with a functioning mind, however, has a choice to enter into or withdraw from a relationship with an object. The assertion that the mind takes the form of the object through the mediation of the senses can only mean that the mind or a part of it undergoes a sensory transformation representing the object of perception.

Further, flowing out does not mean any travel because mind is physically subtle and nonlocal, unlike a gross object confined to a place. Flowing out therefore means establishing a perceptual relationship by which the mind undergoes transformation;

and perceptual experience is a consequence of such transformation. In other words, perception involves a proactive process not very much unlike the way a radar functions. Perceptual process is more like a search light that turns the attention to a particular object; and the emphasis here is on the attention required to focus on the object rather than on the intensity of the stimulus. Once again, this approach is a consequence of the relative importance given to the subject over the object in Indian psychology.

In his commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara explains the relation between consciousness, mind, and body in the following manner. "The *buddhi*, being transparent and next to consciousness, receives the reflection of consciousness. Hence even wise men identify themselves with the *buddhi*. Next comes the *manas*, which receives the reflection of consciousness through the *buddhi*; then the sense organs, through contact with the *manas*; and lastly the body, through the sense organs. Thus consciousness illumines the entire aggregate of the body and the sense organs. It is, therefore, that all people identify themselves with the body and the sense organs and also with their attributes" (III.4.7).

Inference is different from perception. While inferring, the mind does not go out to the object. Rather, it thinks of the object without taking the form of the object. As Bhattacharya (1909) describes, "in perception, the given element and its interpretation are welded together in a unity, while in inference they are kept distinct" (p. 54).

The *buddhi* is not a *tabula rasa*. It is a storehouse of past memories, accumulated *karma*, subliminal impressions, inherited tendencies (*saṁskāra*s and *vāsanā*s). The *vṛtti* is impacted by them and takes further transformations and finally surfaces as a form of the *buddhi*. The light of *Brahman* always envelops the *buddhi*. Consequently, the light that is *consciousness* reflects on the *buddhi* in its *vṛtti* form, resulting in the conscious apprehension of the object. The *buddhi*, then, may choose to respond in appropriate ways by initiating action through its response system, *karmaendriyas*. This is the cognition-action mode in which the *mind* is centrally and constantly involved, unless it is obscured, obstructed or covered by *tamas* as in sleep, or it is voluntarily controlled, as in meditation and objectless *samādhi* states. Conscious apprehension, the final outcome of cognitive process, may be conceived as bestowing or imprinting, to borrow Nagel's (1974) celebrated phrase, the 'what it is like' character on the phenomological object. It is the consummation of the information content (*sattva*) of the object in the subjectivity of consciousness. It is a condition in which the reflection of consciousness on the *buddhi* is reflected back in consciousness.

In the Advaita view, perception is consciousness, but it is Consciousness reflected in the *buddhi*, illuminating the relevant *vṛtti*. The *vṛtti* is the form *buddhi* takes when modified by contact with sense objects. Consciousness in the human condition is called the *jīvasākṣin*. *Sākṣin* (witness consciousness) is an interesting concept in Advaita, which helps to understand: (a) the relationship between the inactive but illuminating *consciousness*, and the active and changing matter, and (b) how the one and indivisible Consciousness appears as many in the human condition without itself interacting and undergoing any transformations. It is the

contention of Advaita that *jīva* is different from *sākṣin*. The person (*jīva*), as mentioned, is embodied consciousness, which means that consciousness is limited and constrained by mental adjuncts. *Jīvasākṣin* is the witnessing consciousness in the person. Here the mind acts as an adjunct to the witnessing *consciousness* (*sākṣin*). This adjunct association renders consciousness of the *jīva* to appear different from consciousness in other persons. This leads to the notion of multiple centers of *consciousness*, as well as the appearance of *consciousness* interacting with the mind and consequent sense of self. The *jīva* in *jīvasākṣin* is limited, qualified, and modified by the mind; but the *sākṣin* itself remains unmodified. To put it differently, in the *jīva*, consciousness is imminent in the mind; in the *sākṣin*, *consciousness* transcends the mind.

The above is a description of the empirical mode of awareness. It is the existential condition of human cognition and action. The limitedness of such awareness and its illusory nature become evident, Advaitins believe, after one awakens with the dawn of pure conscious experience. When awareness moves to the level of pure consciousness, one's relation with reality takes a dramatic turn. The subject–object duality experienced at the empirical level disappears. Knowledge ceases to be representational. Awareness as-such becomes contentless. 'Contentless' means the essential ineffability of experience. This is a state of transcendence where knowing and being become one, differences and distinctions are overcome and one experiences utter subjectivity and objectless consciousness. Whether such a state is ever possible may not be established on rational grounds without making some metaphysical commitments. However, the claims of reality of the states of pure consciousness are not confined to metaphysical presuppositions, but are said to be grounded in genuine experiences of a few highly developed people. We will discuss the implications of this view of cognition in some detail in the next chapter.

4.1.4 Mind in Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika (N–V) System

It is necessary to recognize at this point that Sāṁkhya-Yoga and Advaita views do not exhaust between themselves all the salient ideas concerning mind and consciousness in Hindu thought. Even though they represent the dominant trend in the Indian tradition, there are other equally important epistemological viewpoints and philosophies of mind. The contributions of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems are noteworthy in this context, Nyāya from an epistemological perspective and Vaiśeṣika from a metaphysical view point. Nyāya views are in the dualist tradition, but different in important respects from Cartesian dualism. (For an extensive discussion of Nyāya theory of mind and consciousness, see Chakrabarti 1999; Matilal 2002).

Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika were two independent systems to begin with. However, their respective philosophical perspectives were so close and complementary that by the tenth century CE, they came to be regarded as representing a single system, described as the Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika (N–V) system. They constitute a realistic and pluralistic system. The standard text of Nyāya is Gautama's *Nyāya Sūtra*

(see Gautama et al. 1984); and Kaṇāda's (1985) *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* is the basic text of Vaiśeṣika.

The nonmaterial *ātman* is eternal in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. There are countless number of *ātman*s. The *ātman* in others cannot be perceived directly but must be presumed to exist to account for their consciousness, feelings of pain and pleasure, and volitional activities, which are not qualities attributable to any other substances including the mind (*manas*) (*Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*, 3.1.19; see Kaṇāda 1985). Unlike in Advaita, *consciousness* and the *ātman* are not the same. The former is sustained by the *ātman*.

The basic difference between the Sāṁkhya-Yoga and the AdvaitaVedānta conception of mind on the one hand and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika on the other is that the latter considers the mind a sense organ. As we noted, in Yoga the mind is conceived more as a function and a process. Even in Advaita, notwithstanding the fact that the mind is called *antaḥkaraṇa* (internal organ), it is described essentially as a set of cognitive functions. In Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, the mind, called *manas*, is not the cognizer. The cognizer is the *self* (*ātman*). While the *self* is all-pervasive and the ultimate agency that has the experience and is the enjoyer and doer, such experience is facilitated by the mind (*manas*) which is in contact with the other senses. Mind is atomic in size. It is restless and constantly moving. It is immaterial in the sense that unlike external sense organs, it is not localized. The mind not only functions as the sense organ which helps to perceive such internal states as pain and pleasure as well as universals, it also guides the external senses and synthesizes their inputs. It would seem that the mind (*manas*) in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is restricted to the *manas* aspect of *antaḥkaraṇa* in Sāṁkhya and Advaita. *Ātman* (*self*) in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika appears to take on some of the other functions attributed to *antaḥkaraṇa* in Yoga and Advaita.

Each *ātman* according to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinkers is distinct and different from other *ātmans*. However, its individuality arises from its association with the *manas* (mind). The mind, like the *self*, is eternal. It is the instrument through which the *self* (*ātman*) obtains the knowledge of the external world as well as of internal states and images. The mind makes it possible to connect the *self* with the external world. This connection is the source of one's knowledge of the world. At the same time, it is also the cause of self's bondage, as it is said in *Nyāya-Mañjari*, "*bandha-nimittam manaḥ*."

In the human context, the *self* and the mind are bound together. All psychological functions such as awareness, emotion, and volition do not belong either to the *self* or the mind, but manifest when they are together. While there can be no awareness or consciousness without the *self* (*ātman*), consciousness itself is not the essence of the *self*, but arises as an attribute of *ātman* in its association with the mind. In the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view, every *ātman* has its own *manas* (mind). The latter stays with *ātman* and does not cease to exist after the death of physical body. The connection is severed only when the *ātman* gets its final release in a state of *mokṣa*.

The ultimate goal and endeavor of humans is to free the *ātman* from its association with the mind to achieve *mokṣa*. The freedom consists in overcoming the influence of the mind–body complex on the self. *Mokṣa* is the pure state of the *self* (*ātman*) devoid of its entanglement with the mind. At the time of death the *self* gets

detached from the body, but its connection with the mind continues. The mind carries with it the *karma* it has accumulated and binds the *self*, giving rise to rebirth and the cycle of *saṃsāra*.

The spirit of detachment is necessary to attain *mokṣa*. The system advocates a three-stage process. The first stage involves the practice of moral actions (*dharma*) and overcoming selfish desires and hedonic impulses. The second stage consists in knowing the ultimate truth about the *self* through study and reflection. The third stage is meditation on the ultimate truth leading to its realization. Such realization of truth will dispel all ignorance arising from the *ātman's* bondage with the *manas* (mind) and help one to attain freedom in a liberated state of the *ātman*.

In line with the Indian tradition, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinkers regard mind as physical. In fact, one could argue that the mind is neither physical in the sense the body is physical, nor nonphysical like consciousness, and that it belongs to a third category. Different in essentials from the physical substance is the *self*, which is entirely nonphysical. *Self* (*ātman*) in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is like *puruṣa* in Sāṁkhya-Yoga except that it is not consciousness itself. It is the substratum of consciousness, just as matter is the substratum of all qualities that physical objects manifest. Consciousness is a quality of the *self* that manifests under conditions of self's contact with the mind. Thus, unlike in Advaita and Sāṁkhya, consciousness in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is not a substance but an attribute of the *self*. This is an important difference; significant metaphysical and epistemological discussions ensue from it. However, what is important from our perspective is the assertion of Nyāya thinkers that consciousness requires a nonphysical substance, the *self*, to sustain it. Also, "consciousness" in Nyāya is more like empirical consciousness in Advaita, which manifests as intentional awareness. Pure consciousness, however, is entirely devoid of any empirical qualities, which are indeed adventitious and arise in association with the physical mind. *Self* without its association to the mind is indeed consciousness as-such or pure consciousness. It serves the same purpose as in Yoga. The only difference is, it would seem, that N–V thinkers discuss *self* in its association with the mind. In this sense, in its functional aspects, *self* in the N–V system is like the *jīva* or the person as we discussed. Therefore, the differences between Sāṁkhya-Yoga and Vedānta on the one hand and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika on the other do not appear crucial and fundamental to substantially alter what we may describe as the Hindu tradition.

In Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika ontology, the qualities are just as real as the substances. The substances exist independently of qualities, and qualities abide in substances. A quality is "that which has substance for its substratum" (*Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* 1.1.16, see Kaṇāda 1985). The qualities of pain and pleasure, desire and hatred, will and consciousness are special to the *self* (*ātman*). To these Praśastapāda adds *dharma* (virtue), *adharma* (vice), and *saṁskāra* (mental disposition).

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinkers worked out in some detail the perceptual process. Vātsyāyana in his commentary on *Nyāya Sūtra* states that perception arises when the *self* (*ātman*) comes into contact with the mind (*manas*), and the mind with the sense organ (*indriya*), and the sense organ with an object (Jha 1939). According to Nyāya, the self, mind, and senses, which are involved in the process of cognition,

are substances. The objects of perception are either substances or qualities of substances.

It appears that the differences between Nyāya and other orthodox systems in this respect is more conceptual than substantive. Consciousness as-such, *Brahman* in Advaita and *puruṣa* in Yoga, is attributed by Nyāya thinkers to the *self* (*ātman*). The agentic aspect of *ātman* comes to the fore and consciousness becomes its essential attribute. Again, the mind (*manas*) is a somewhat restricted or narrowed *antaḥkaraṇa* or *citta* in Yoga. Some of the functions of the *buddhi* in Advaita/Yoga are attributed to the *self* in Nyāya. Further, whereas the mind is seen in its functional aspects in Advaita as well as Yoga, it is considered a substance, an organ, an entity in Nyāya. Each system takes it conceptual stand by keeping in perspective its metaphysical commitments. However, from a psychological standpoint the difference between them does not appear to be basic.

4.1.5 Mind in Buddhism

Buddhist thought like the Hindu has several strands, ranging from naive realism to outright nihilism. Notwithstanding the differences in metaphysical assumptions, there is a general consensus on the nature of mind; and not surprisingly it is not different from the main trend we discussed in Sāṁkhya-Yoga. The shared notions include (a) the mind is not an agent/agency but a set of processes and (b) it is material. However, there is one difference between Sāṁkhya-Yoga–Advaita views and Buddhism in that the latter makes no meaningful distinction between mind and consciousness in *kāmaloka* (phenomenal world), often implying their identity. The distinction emerges and becomes clear only when we move on to the transcendental realm of *rūpa*, *arūpa,* and *lokuttara* domains, as we discussed in the previous chapter. Therefore, what is said of consciousness in the phenomenal world of *kāmaloka* applies to the mind as well. Consequently, there will be some overlap between our discussion of consciousness in the previous chapter and the present discussion of the Buddhist concept of mind.

Mind is defined by Buddhaghoṣa (1920) in *Atthasālinī* as "that which thinks of its object" (Vol. 2, p. 148). It is cognitive in character. Its function is to guide, discriminate, and inform. It manifests in a series and thus has continuity. *Nāma* and *rūpa*—name and form or mind and body—are but convenient terms to depict highly complex and continuously changing processes. Reality is always in a state of ceaseless change; and both mind and body are in a state of flux. The mind is like a stream. It maintains one constant form, one seeming identity, even though its contents, like water in a stream, continuously change. In *Dhamma Saṅgaṇi*, the mind is accounted for in entirely phenomenological terms and the analysis is restricted to the states of mind. We find no reference to the personal agent. In *Milinda Pañha* (Davids 1963), Nāgasena, expounding the doctrine of "no soul," quotes the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* thus: "Just as it is by the condition precedent of the

coexistence of its various parts that the 'chariot' is used, just so is it that when the skandhas are there we talk of a 'being'" (p. 45).

Whenever a reference is made to the mind, it is to one or more of the *skandhas*. The *skandhas* are groups or aggregates of bodily and mental states. These are five kinds, namely: (1) *rūpa*, (2) *vedanā*, (3) *saññā*, (4) *saṅkhāra*, and (5) *viññāna*. In *Saṁyutta Nikāya*, *rūpa* is defined as that which "manifests as the touch of gnats, mosquitoes, wind, the sun, and the snake; it manifests, therefore, it is called *rūpa*" (Dasgupta 1922/1957, Vol. 1, p. 95). Under *rūpa* are included the four elements or the *mahābhūta*s—the body as well as the senses. As Dasgupta (1922/1957) points out:

> The four elements manifested themselves in certain forms and were therefore called rūpa; the forms of affection that appeared were also called rūpa; many other mental states or features which appeared with them were also called rūpa…. The mahābhūtas or four elements were themselves but changing manifestations, and they together with all that appeared in association with them were called rūpa and formed the rūpakhanda (the classes of sense materials, sense data, senses and sensations). (Vol. 1, p. 95)

It would appear that *rūpa* may mean gross matter as well as sense data. The double meaning may not be considered inconsistent inasmuch as Buddhism makes no sharp distinction between the physical and the mental. *Vedanā* is feeling; and it can be pleasurable, painful, or indifferent. *Saññā* (Sanskrit: *saṁjñā*) is sensation/perception. It is representational and includes perceptual as well as conceptual knowledge. *Saṅkhāra* means both volition as well as a synthetic function that enables the several mental properties or elements (*cetasika*s) to function in association with each other. *Saṅkhāra* as a *skandha*, to quote Aung, "really means the group of volitions and other associated factors" (1929, p. 274). *Viññāna* is consciousness. It is referred to the cognitive process as well as the resulting awareness.

Cognition: The process of perception is described in the *Compendium of Philosophy* thus:

> *When*, say, a visible object, after one thought-moment has passed enters the avenue of sight and, the life-continuum vibrating twice, the stream of that continuum is interrupted; *then* consciousness of the kind which apprehends sensations, apprehending that visible object, rises and ceases. (Aung 1929, p. 126)

Cognitive process thus involves six steps—(1) the impinging of the sensory stimulus on the peripheral system, which is described as sense-object contact; (2) excitation of *bhavaṅga*, the stream of being; (3) the momentary arrest of *bhavaṅga*; (4) apperception of the object perceived; (5) registering in and retention of the object apperceived; and (6) the cessation of awareness and its submergence into *bhavaṅga*. This process is described by the following analogy:

> A man, lost in the deepest sleep, is lying at the foot of a mango tree with his head covered. A wind now stirs the branches, and a fruit falls beside the sleeping man. He is in consequence aroused from dreamless slumbers. He removes his head-covering in order to ascertain what has awakened him. He sees the newly fallen fruit, picks it up and examines it. Apprehending it to be a fruit with certain constitutive attributes observed in the previous stage of investigation, he eats it, and then replacing his head-covering, once more resigns himself to sleep.

> The dreamless sleep corresponds to the unperturbed current of the stream of being (*bhavaṅga*). The striking of the wind against the tree is like the "past" life-moment, during which the object enters the stream and passes down with it, without perturbing it. The swaying of the branches in that wind represents the vibration of the stream of being. The falling of the fruit corresponds to the arrest or interruption of being, the moment at which the stream is "cut off" by thought; the waking of the man to the awakening of attention in the act of cognition on occasion of sense; the removal of the head-covering to the sense-reaction of sight. The picking up of the fruit is comparable to the operation of receiving; inspection of it recalls the examining function. The simple apprehension of the fruit as-such, with certain constitutive attributes of its own, corresponds to the discriminative or determining stage; the eating of the fruit resembles the act of apperception. Finally, the swallowing of the last morsels that are left in the mouth corresponds to the operation of retention, after which the mind subsides into mere vital process, even as the man once more falls asleep. (Aung 1929, p. 30)

What has been said so far relates to perceptions that are very vivid; but Buddhists accept various grades of vividness, based on the intensity of the sense impressions. They account for these in terms of thought moments. In order to attain an apperceptive stage, a cognition needs to last for 17 thought moments. The 17 moments represent the duration from the moment the object enters the stream until the stream resumes its flow. When an object causes a less vivid impression, then, there is no retention of the object. There is no apperception at all. When the object makes a very slight impression, there is not even a sensation. Thus, there are four grades of sense-object contact: (1) full sense cognition with retention; (2) apperception without retention; (3) sensation without apperception; and (4) futile sense impression, which is too weak to be translated into sensation (that is, it fails to hold the arrested *bhavaṅga* for any length of time). The greater the intensity of the sense impression, the shorter will be the duration required for the vibration to set in after the object reaches the field of presentation.

In retentive apperception, the stream is perturbed within one moment of the object's entry into the field. In nonretentive apperception, the vibration of the stream commences only after two or three moments have lapsed since the object's entry into the stream. In nonapperceptive sensation, the object causes excitation in the stream only after five to nine moments. When the object fails to set a vibration in the stream for ten or more moments, the impressions cannot reach the state of sensation.

In *Viśuddhimagga*, Buddhoghoṣa (1923, Vol. 2) says that the mind bestows subjectivity in the sensorially received inputs. The mind processes the sensory inputs, orders, and organizes them. He describes the process of perception thus.

> Immediately after the activity of visual perception or other sense perception has ceased, the *manas* which determines the visual object from other objects begins to function; its function is receiving the visual percept or the other percepts; its actual manifestation is suchness; and the moment from whence it starts its action is the moment or situation when the activity of visual perception or of the other sense perceptions ceased. (XIV. 97)

In *Milindapañha*, Nāgasena explains the function of the mind in perception with the following simili.

> Just, Sire, as the townguard, seated at the crossroads in the middle of the town, would see a man coming from the east, from the west, from the south, from the north. So, your majesty, the object seen by the eye, the sound heard by the ear, the smell smelt by the nose, the taste tasted by the tongue, the tangible touched by the body or a quality is recognized by the mind. (Davids 1988/1890)

It needs to be mentioned that we seldom have a single isolated sense cognition. Usually there are strings of related sense impressions that go through the reflective processes of imagination, memory, conception, discrimination, and classification in rapid succession before an individual has a discernible perceptual awareness of an external event or object.

Mental reflection is made possible by the retentiveness of the objects perceived. Objects of past experience can be recalled by themselves, or in association with others. Also, new objects can be imaginatively constructed by a combination of the parts of previously experienced objects. A combination of these with the position of the object in time—that is, whether it belongs to past, present, or future—makes it possible for Buddhists to distinguish between varieties of reflective processes.

In Buddhistic view, perception itself is always indeterminate. It is in a sense nameless and ineffable. It can be neither named nor recognized and is thus free from all interpretative processes of the mind. In other words, perception is pure sensation representing nothing more than what is given in experience. To have the sensation of "blue" is not the same as knowing it as blue. Perception then is immediate and "pure acquaintance." It is free from construction, name, and generality as Diṅnāga says in his *Pramāṇa-samuccaya*. Perception, which is devoid of all interpretation, is therefore necessarily true because there is no possibility of being different from the object that gives rise to it (Hittori 1968).

There are four kinds of perception. The first kind is sensory (*indriya jñāna*). Perception at this stage is no more than bare sensation resulting from the sensory process. The second kind of perception is mental perception (*mano-vijñāna*). It is the successive stage accompanied by sensory processing. It is the transitory stage between perception as-such and thought. *Sva-saṁvedana* (self-consciousness), the third kind of perception, is the direct perception of mental states like pain and pleasure, which also does not involve any interpretation and therefore is free from error. The fourth kind of perception is *yogi-pratyakṣa*, nonsensuous awareness brought about by intense practice of concentration and meditation.

4.1.6 Mind in Jainism

Jainism is one of the heterodox systems in classical Indian thought. It is earlier than Buddhism. The name of Vardhamāna is associated with the rise and spread of Jainism even though he is by no means the founder of Jainism either as a religion or

a school/system of philosophy. Vardhamāna is believed to have lived between 599 and 527 BCE. Umāsvāti's (first century CE) *Tattvārtha-Sūtra* is the main and standard text of Jaina philosophy (see Umāsvāti et al. 1944).

According to Jainism *jīva* and *ajīva* are the two principles that govern reality. *Jīva* is the *self*, like *ātman* in Hindu thought. *Ajīva* is lifeless matter. The essence of *self* is *consciousness*. *Self* is the seat of all knowledge; as such it is omniscient. Its potential omniscience is, however, obscured in the human condition by the presence of *karma* in the person. *Karma* itself is considered a kind of subtle matter; and it is the condition of human bondage. Therefore, the liberation of the *self*, which is the goal of human endeavor, consists in destroying the accumulated *karma* on the one hand and stopping the accretion and flow of new *karma* on the other. Mind has a role in all this.

Some Jaina thinkers view the mind as a sense organ while some others speak of it as not being so. Therefore, it would be quite appropriate to say that in Jaina conception mind is something more than a sense organ, in that it functions only partially as a sense organ. *Akalaṅka* (1998) argues that the mind is an internal sense organ. Unlike the external sense organs, mind is imperceptible and its function is not restricted to just one mode. Mind is involved in attending to some sensory inputs while neglecting some others. Thus attention is an important function of the mind. It is present in all cases of memory and recollection. That mind is imperceptible, unlike the eye or the ear, does not make the mind any less a sense organ. Mind is a sense organ because it does not depend on any other sense organ in its discriminatory functions. At the same time, the mind cannot apprehend external objects without the sensory inputs from the other organs. The external organs, however, are limited to perceive objects in spatiotemporal proximity whereas the mind is capable of apprehending objects remote in space and time.

Jaina thinkers generally consider mind as corporeal. It is corporeal because it responds to corporeal events. The mind is influenced, for example, when it is intoxicated by alcohol consumption. In other words, the mind, inasmuch as it interacts with corporeal events, must be seen as corporeal, even though its physicality is very subtle. While the primary function of the mind is to mediate in cases of ordinary knowledge and give us the knowledge of objects, the mind is also involved in assisting the five senses in performing their functions.

Jaina distinguishes between two kinds of perception—ordinary and extraordinary. Ordinary perception (*saṁvyāvahārika pratyakṣa*) is the routine perception of objects. Extraordinary perception (*mukhya pratyakṣa*) is supernormal perception. Again, these two kinds of perception are further distinguished. There are two kinds of ordinary perception—perceptions determined by the senses (*indriya-nibandhana*) and perceptions not produced by the senses (*anindriya-nibandhana*). They may be termed also as sense perceptions and mental perceptions. There are three kinds of extraordinary perception. They are (1) clairvoyant perception (*avadhi*), (2) mind-to-mind communication or telepathy (*manaḥparyaya*), and (3) omniscience or infinite knowledge unlimited by time and space (*kevala*).

As Sinha (1933/1958) explains in some detail, there are four stages in ordinary perceptions according to Jaina theory of perception. The first stage is *avagraha*

which immediately follows the presentation of a stimulus (*darśana*). It involves simple apprehension of sensory data, such as when one has nondistinct awareness. At the level of *avagraha*, there is the apprehension of the sensation, e.g., apprehension that something is white. The next stage is the desire to relate this knowledge with the relevant object. This is the stage of *īhā* (desire). The next stage in the perceptual process is *avāya*. It is the stage at which one ascertains the nature of the object itself as desired at the *īhā* stage. It involves assimilation and discrimination and gives rise to the definitive perception of the object. The final stage is called *dhāraṇā*, which involves the retention of the object in one's mind. As Nemicandra, in his *Dravyasaṁgraha* puts it, "*dhāraṇā* consists of the lasting impression which results after the object, with its particulars, is definitely ascertained. It is this impression (*saṁskāra*), which enables us to remember the object afterwards" (Sinha 1933/1958, Vol. 1, p. 109).

According to Jaina thinkers, knowledge is perspectival. There are mainly two perspectives. One is the worldly, external perspective (*vyavahāra dṛṣṭi*) and the other *niścaya dṛṣṭi* (inner directed self-knowing). When knowledge is directed outward one has the knowledge of the world, and when directed inward, there is self-generated intuitive awareness. Kundakunda of the second century CE, an influential Jaina logician, raises the question whether knowledge is self-revealing or object-revealing. His answer is that from the *vyavahāra* perspective it is object-revealing and from the *niścaya* perspective it is self-revealing. Thus it is not an either/or situation. The *kevala jñāni* has access to both even though because of his disinterestedness in worldly things he engages himself in the intuitive experience of the *self*. Thus in the final analysis, one has in the highest state of *kevala jñāna* what may be termed as self-realization where there is no difference between knowledge and *self*, knowing and being.

4.2 Common Thread

To conclude this section on the mind, we may note that while the different systems have different conceptions of the mind, there appears to be a common thread running through them. First, mind is considered different in a fundamental sense from consciousness. The only exception here is possibly Buddhism. Even here the equivocation of consciousness and the mind is confined to the empirical realm. At the transcendental level, the distinction between mind and consciousness is obvious as in the case of other systems. Second, there is a general agreement that mind is physical unlike consciousness seen as nonphysical reality. Third, mind is seen as the interface and gateway between consciousness on the one hand and the physical world on the other. As a tool of awareness, mind is one's reality connection. When the mind connects to the external world through the gateway of the senses, we have phenomenal awareness. With its connection to consciousness, mind enables one to have transcendental realization.

The above notion of mind has important implications at theoretical as well as practical levels. At the theoretical level, it helps to overcome the Cartesian impasse and the unbridgeable dualism between body and mind. It is self-evident as Descartes contended, that one cannot doubt that he is doubting. However, it is equally evident that one cannot have such a doubt if his brain is dysfunctional. Therefore, the body is equally necessary to enable one to think. This deflates the notion that thought is the essence of nonphysical mind, as Descarates contended. The Indian conception of the mind as an intermediary between nonphysical *consciousness* and the physical world helps to overcome the Cartesian impasse.

Further, we have here a theoretical base for studying religious phenomena, extraordinary human abilities, and higher states of consciousness that are neglected in the mainstream psychology today. As we will discuss later in the chapter, the Indian conception of mind has important practical implications. It provides for pure conscious states and opens up possibilities for personal transformation and for enhancing human potentials.

4.3 *Indriyas* and the Sensory-Motor Apparatus

The mind, as we noted, is conceived in the Indian tradition as the main instrument in the cognitive process. In its function it makes use of the body, mostly the sensory-motor system. Consequently, the senses constitute a very important segment of the mind–body complex. They empower the person and enable her to interact with the world. In fact, several Indian philosophical texts elevate them to celestial heights and consider senses as the "deities" in our body. Rastogi (2004) calls our attention to it in the following words: "The word *deva* has 'sense' (*indriya*) as one of its meanings. Abhinavagupta, in his *Gītārthasaṁgraha*… presents the senses as sense deities or presiding deities of senses…" (p. 101). Chakrabarti (2004) adds:

> In Indian psychology, from its prehistoric origin in the Vedas and the early Upaniṣads, the five sense organs, along with the five vital breaths (*indriyas* and *prāṇas*) have played an important intermediate role in the search for the self from the grosser outer world towards the subtle inner world. Every sense organ is enlivened, upon the Vedic conception, by a presiding diety (*indriyādhiṣṭhātṛ devatā*) who identifies Himself with the function of the sense organ. Since the division of the physical qualities of matter such as color, taste, smell, sound and touch is inspired by the division of their grasping sense organs, the concept of sense organs has laid the foundation of the isomorphism between the macrocosm (the world) and the microcosm (human body–mind complex). (p. 9)

All this may sound to a student of psychology a kind of "animism" unworthy of scientific attention. All that is meant here, however, is that "senses" are such important and complex parts of the body that they appear to belong to a different world and cannot be understood in simplistic terms. The metaphorical epithets and acclaims can be safely ignored in an attempt to understand the sensory functioning from a psychological perspective.

As in the case of "mind," there are different theories of *indriyas* (senses) in the classical Indian thought. However, what is of interest to the Indian thinkers is not the physiology of the sense organs, but their function and role in human quest for knowledge and freedom. It is not difficult to find an underlying unity in their different postulations relating to senses and their functions that Indian psychology can gainfully use. Despite their significant differences, all the systems uniformly accept the need to gain control of the sensory system. They also agree that meditation is a helpful technique to achieve the necessary control. Senses are considered the centers of power and in their control and proper harnessing lies one's well being.

Indriya is generally translated as "sense organ." However, *indriya* in the Indian tradition means more than an organ of the sense. There are wide differences among Indian thinkers on (1) the definition of *indriyas*, (2) their function, (3) number, (4) role in the perceptual process, and (5) the putative relationship between *indriyas* on the one hand and between *indriyas* and the respective objects with which they are associated on the other. These differences are primarily due to their respective metaphysical considerations and consequent conceptual categorizations. Let us first consider the broad differences among the major systems of Indian thought and then note if there are any basic agreements and generalizations we could make about the senses as the significant part of the mind–body complex involved in human functioning.

Etymologically, *indriya* means that which is attached to or directed toward its object (*viṣaya-jātam (udddiśya) dravati iti indriyam*). The ear is attached to the object sound, for example. We generally consider the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin as the five senses. They are the vehicles of cognition. They provide the necessary inputs to the mind to comprehend the external objects. Therefore, they are termed *jñānendriyas* (cognitive senses) and also referred to as *bahirindriyas* (external senses). In several Indian systems *manas* (an aspect of the mind), along with five other organs of action (*karmendriyas*), is also considered an *indriya*.

As we noted, *manas* (mind), according to Nyāya, is a sense organ, though internal, and it is atomic in size. However, for several Advaita thinkers it is not a separate *indriya*. Jaina thinkers also do not consider the *manas* as an *indriya*. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Pūrva-Mimāṁsā schools, there are six *indriyas*. They include the five cognitive senses such as seeing and hearing and the mind (*manas*) considered as the internal sense. Sāṁkhya-Yoga adds five more *indriyas*, which include *vāk* (voice), *pāṇi* (hands), *pāda* (legs), *pāyu* (anus), and *upastha* (sex organs). These are called *karmendriyas*, the instruments of action as distinguished from *jñānendriyas*. *Manas* is both a *jñānendriya* and *karmendriya*. Advaitins also accept the five *karmendriyas* in addition to the five cognitive senses, *jñānendriyas*, even though there is no unanimity among them about on whether *manas* is a sense organ.

Some of the Buddhist texts like Vasubandu's *Abhidharmakośa* (Sāṁkṛtyāyana 1988) refer to 22 *indriyas*. In Abhidharma view, a sense is not an organ but a faculty that is primarily responsible to certain human functions. Vasubandhu rejects that voice is an *indriya* on the ground that it is not the predominant factor in speech.

Speech and use of words are to be learned among other things by the manipulation and exercise of the tongue. Likewise, hands and legs are not to be considered as senses because they are not the principal/sole factors for grasping and walking. Included under the 22 senses are the five cognitive senses—eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body—and mind. Added to them are feminity, masculinity, life principle, physical pain, physical pleasure, mental pain, mental pleasure, equanimity, faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding. The remaining three are the knowledge functions—the quest for the unknown, knowledge, and knower.

It is clear that the Buddhist conception of the senses is not limited to the physical and physiological instruments/organs of knowing. Rather all the necessary factors and functions associated with the goal of *nirvāṇa* are considered senses. Unlike several other orthodox systems which hold that at the time of *mokṣa* (liberation) the senses cease to function as instruments of knowing and doing, the Buddhists seem to hold that the senses are not an obstruction but have a significant role to play in attaining the state of *nirvāṇa*. The *indriya* in Buddhist view is that it is an input provider for knowledge to arise.

Dvaita (dualist) Vedānta adds to the list of eleven one more *indriya*. It is *sākṣin*. *Sākṣin* is witness consciousness. *Sākṣin* in the human condition functions like an *indriya*. Its functions include self-consciousness and the truth function in knowledge process. In addition, according to Dvaita, it gives us the sense of time and space.

In Nyāya, which defines perception in terms of sense-object contact (*indriyārtha sannikarṣa*), *indriya* is an indispensible condition for perception. This view is not shared by several others, notably Jaina thinkers who include under perception not only sense-mediated awareness but also extrasensory perception and other non-sensory modes of awareness. Advaitins also reject the notion that sensory contact is necessary for all kinds of perception. They hold that mental properties, for example, are accessible to direct awareness without sensory mediation.

Again, three is the issue whether *indriyas* are merely passive receptors that provide sensory inputs or whether they also creatively contribute to knowledge over and above the inputs. Here again there are differences among Indian thinkers.

In Jaina theory of *indriyas*, we find a variety of ways by which *indriyas* are classified. Keeping in view the nature of the contact between the sense and its object, *indriyas* are classified into gross (*sthūla*) and subtle (*sūkṣma*). For example, touch and taste are considered gross senses whereas vision is included among subtle senses. Again, *indriyas* are grouped under the categories of *dravyendriyas* (physical) and *bhavendriyas* (nonphysical). The latter are credited with bestowing nonphysical properties on the knowledge event. In a similar way, we find a distinction made between physical (*dravya*) aspects of the mind and the nonphysical mind (*bhāvamana*) in Jainism. Consistent with the *anekāntavāda*, which emphasizes the notion of many facets of reality, the metaphysical core of pluralism, Jaina view of *indriyas* is an attempt to bridge the physical–nonphysical divide in human cognition.

The nature and function of the senses in the perceptual process is elaborated with significant detail by Abhinavagupta and other proponents of Kashmir Saivism. Briefly, sense organs receive the reflection emanating from the objects. These reflections are then reflected in the inner organ. The sense here means more than the

physical organ. Optical sense is more than the eyeballs on which the images of the objects are reflected. As Rastogi (2004) points out, the reflective process involved in perceptual awareness is three-tiered—retina, visual sense, and the mind. The image on the retina is different from the image on the optical sense. The physical form manifest on the retina is the cause and the form taken by the optical sense is the effect. Again, the reflection on the optical sense is the cause of the form taken by the *buddhi*, the mental form as manifest in a *vṛtti*. To quote Rastogi (2004):

> When a perception occurs, the process that takes place is somewhat like this. First a person confronts an object. The internal organ is the promoter or driver that sets the appropriate sense to work. The sense, then, comes in touch with its object which is nothing but the reflection of the external object on the sense organ which receives its reflection. This physical image is then illumined by the light of consciousness and casts its reflection through that light on Buddhi. This illumination by the subjective light is termed as the reflection of the individual knowing self. Now we are in a purely psychological realm. This results into indeterminate knowledge i.e., the consciousness of the light of knowledge having been affected. It is called indeterminate knowledge, because it is not possible to say at this stage as to what exactly is the cause of the affection of the pure light of knowledge. This view is of course different from the view of Naiyāyikas that the senses are essentially physical, the view that Abhinavagupta disputes at great length. (p. 97)

Not withstanding the above major differences among Indian thinkers on the concept, number, nature, and functions of *indriyas*, as Sarkar (2004) points out, there are significant similarities among them that could be construed to provide a common conceptual framework for discussion of *indriyas*.

(1) There are five basic sensory modalities, viz., vision, hearing, taste, touch, and speech.
(2) These require necessary external unique receptors. These receptors are response-specific. Eyes enable us to see and ears make us hear and so on.
(3) We also experience awareness of internal states. This cannot be accomplished by the five external receptors. Therefore, we need another instrument to act as an internal receptor for giving us awareness of internal states. This is the sixth sense, in addition to the above five, which is generally called *manas*.
(4) In normal sensory perception, all the above cognitive tools are necessary but not sufficient conditions to give subjective awareness of objects or internal states.
(5) Subjective awareness is possible only in the presence of the conscious principle, which is variously called, *ātman*, *puruṣa*, *sākṣin*, and so on.
(6) Consequently, *indriyas* by themselves are insufficient to give us knowledge and awareness of the world. They only provide the sensory inputs necessary for perceptual awareness.
(7) *Manas* plays dual roles, as an internal receptor and a connecting link between external sensory inputs and consciousness (*ātman*).
(8) If control of the mind is helpful to gain cognitive excellence and finally *mokṣa* (liberation), so is the control of sensory functions necessary to achieve cognitive excellence and reach the ultimate goal of freedom, as conceived by most of the systems of Indian thought.

Keeping the above common conceptual framework in perspective, we can readily see how yoga practices of different kinds serve the purpose of gaining control of sensory functions. There is extensive experimental literature available on the effects of meditation on human system, including the functioning of the senses. For one thing, meditational practices appear to enable the practitioner to gain a degree of voluntary control over sensory inputs and functions. Cognitive excellence is often impeded by (a) lack of concentration and (b) internal attitudinal inconsistencies. Now, meditative exercise of focused attention as in *dhāraṇā* should help remove sensory distractions and *dhyāna* in its turn would help psychological integration of the person to overcome conflicting pulls and pressures. Such would indeed be conducive to achieve cognitive excellence.

Indian thinkers believe that there is more to human endeavor than merely achieving cognitive excellence. They believe in transcognitive states and the possibility of reaching those states. Again, yoga is relevant here. There appears to be a general consensus that sensory functions impede and obstruct the manifestation of transcognitive states and that reality may be seen in a less distorted and more truthful state in such transcognitive states. It follows, then, the control of sensory inputs and functions is a necessary precondition for personal liberation and transformation as well as to enable one to achieve different kinds of excellence. Hence is the importance of understanding the nature of *indriyas* and how one may achieve control over sensory functioning.

4.4 A Model of the Mind–Body Complex

What we had described in the previous sections is the broad spectrum of ideas relating to the mind–body complex. From this bird's eye view of the nature, scope, and functions of human mind in the Indian tradition, it is clear that there are distinct and quite divergent views on the concept of mind and the senses. In some ways they parallel those in the West. They are those like Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinkers who uphold the substantive notion of the mind and those like the Buddhists who consider mind as a process. Then, in AdvaitaVedānta and Sāṁkhya-Yoga, the mind is seen more like a function. Further, some of the Buddhists like Buddhaghoṣa have asserted the intentionality of the mind. It is also obvious that there are some major differences between Indian and Western conceptions of the mind, which have profound implications for psychological theory and practice. The descriptive accounts in Western philosophies that consider mind as substance, process, function, or intention are taken in the Indian tradition to a different level of discussion. Consequently, some of the problems of Western conceptions are sidestepped and new approaches to the study of mind become manifest. From the various descriptive accounts we considered, it is possible to derive a model of the mind–body complex, ignoring the many differences in detail between the different systems of Indian thought. The new model is sufficiently distinct and different from the Western conceptions of the mind to merit consideration by psychologists as a viable alternative. It is heuristic and has

important implications for psychology in general and Indian psychology in particular. The following are some of the main features of the model with its metatheoretical base. They are stated in a succinct summary form.

1. The mind is different from consciousness. Unlike consciousness, mind is physical, albeit subtle, and is subject to physical laws that relate to subtle matter.
2. The mind is also different from the brain. Unlike the brain, the mind is subtle in form and composition; and as such it is nonlocal in the sense that it is capable of functioning without the normal space-time constraints.
3. The mind–body complex is the instrument of one's thought, passion, and action.
4. The mind in association with the brain and body becomes conditioned and is consequently constrained and driven by bodily factors.
5. The prime manifestation of the conditioned mind is the ego.
6. The conditioned mind is so biased that the truth it seeks gets clouded and even distorted; knowing in human condition becomes fallible; and behavior of the person tends to be imperfect. Consequently, ultimate truth evades the conditioned mind. Mind itself becomes an obstacle, if the human quest is for truth and self-realization. This point is central to Śaṅkara's thinking. It is further discussed in some detail in the chapter on self.
7. Mind holding the reins, the person becomes the knower (*jñātā*), the doer (*kartā*) and the enjoyer of the fruits of her actions (*bhoktā*). The mind in its agentic function acts as the self. It is behind the empirical self as distinguished from *self*, *ātman*, or *puruṣa*, which is consciousness as-such.
8. Mind does not generate consciousness; rather it reflects *consciousness*.
9. The person in search of identity misconstrues the mind as her true self and hypostatizes the ego function as the enduring self. Consequently, self-*gratification* replaces self-*realization* as the goal of one's endeavor.
10. The mind may be functionally distinguished into three constituents—*buddhi*, *ahaṁkāra*, and *manas*.
11. *Buddhi*, which is commonly translated as the intellect, is the psychic component. It is in a sense the essential and core aspect of the mind. It is *sattva* at its best in human condition. Uncorrupted it is *almost* like consciousness. It has the ability to reflect consciousness in its purity. *Buddhi* is the seat of memory and instrument of discrimination and creative action. It is also the depository of *karma* and the storehouse of *saṁskāras* and *vāsanās*, unconscious complexes and instinctual tendencies.
12. *Ahaṁkāra* engenders the ego sense. It manifests as the "me" in each person. Identity is its defining characteristic. It is the source of the distinction between the self and the other. The *ahaṁkāra* aspect of the mind appropriates the sensorially processed inputs, breaks the inherent nexus between knowing and being, and creates an artificial distinction between them.
13. The *manas* is like a central processor. Attention is its defining characteristic; filtering and analysis are its other functions. It also acts as the internal sense organ.

14. The mind in its totality is the interfacing instrumentality that is connected at one end with the brain and bodily processes of the person with which it is associated. At the other end, the mind is poised to receive the light of consciousness that illumines its content.
15. Thus, the mind is (a) the surface that reflects consciousness, (b) the ground from which the contents of one's cognition spring, (c) the seat of ego, and (d) the storehouse of past actions and their effects. Because of such a complexity, the reflections of consciousness in the mind are subjected to bias, distortion, and misinterpretation. Further, the person misconstrues the ego as the *self*.
16. The functioning mind with its ego gets entangled by its own complexity. Entangled, the mind becomes unsteady and distracted. Exposed to the incoming stimuli in the form of sensory inputs, excited by the internally generated imagery and conditioned by *saṁskāras* and *vasanās*, the mind is constantly in a state of flux. It is unsteady and prone to tension and turbulence. Such congenital unsteadiness is the source of distortions in one's perceptions. The unsteadiness causes turbulence on its surface and prevents the mind from faithfully reflecting consciousness. The mind of a person is not a *tabula rasa*. Nor is it in a quiescent state. Rather it is imprinted with *saṁskāra*s and *vāsanā*s, is conditioned by the accumulated *karma,* and is constantly fluctuating and unsteady.
17. In one's quest for truth and perfection in being, there is therefore the basic need to make the mind steady and turbulent-free. This can be accomplished by disentangling the mind by systematic deconstruction of the ego.
18. There are several ways of doing this. One way is practice of yogic meditation, which results in focussed attention that inhibits distractions. Practice of meditation needs to be accompanied by an attitude of dispassionateness (*vairāgya*). The practice of concentration and cultivation of *vairāgya* (dispassionateness) are the twin principles guiding the practices of yoga to tame the mind and make it steady. Other ways of deconstructing the ego include self-surrender by practice of celestial love, devotion (*bhakti*), and action without attachment to results (*niṣkāma karma*).
19. When the mind becomes steady and the ego is under control, the person tends to be less biased and be in a position (a) to come closer to truth, (b) experience consciousness as-such, (c) to narrow the gap between knowing and being, and (d) have access to a variety of hidden human potentials.
20. Thus the mind in the Indian tradition is the vehicle of one's journey from the ordinary to the extraordinary states of experience, from rational thinking and creative excellence in knowing to transcendental realization of being, from the mundane to the moral, and from *saṁsāra* to spirituality. In all this, the link between the mind and body cannot be ignored.
21. The senses in the Indian tradition are considered more than the physical instruments or the physiological organs. They are also centers of power; and they have a significant role in constructing one's perceptual reality. The senses register the energy patterns emanating from the world of objects and reflect them on the *manas*. These reflections cause the *manas* to process the sensory

inputs. However, it is the *manas* that initiates and triggers the cognitive process. In other words, the flow in the perceptual process is from the mind to the object and not from the stimulus to the subject. This gives the impression that the mind is actually going out to the object. Such a "travel" is not necessary because the mind being subtle is nonlocal.

22. *Manas* has dual functions—(a) it processes the sensory inputs; and (b) acts also as the sixth sense and receives the inputs from the internal states. In its function (a) it is an aspect of the mind in addition to *buddhi* and *ahaṁkāra*.
23. Understanding the nature and functioning of the *indriyas* is necessary for gaining control over them. Appropriate control of the functioning of *indriyas* is helpful (a) to achieve cognitive excellence and (b) to reach transcognitive states.
24. Meditation in its various forms is helpful to gain control over the sensory processes.
25. Just as the mind is a source of human suffering and also a resource for achieving bliss, so are the senses. In their proper utilization lies human happiness.

4.4.1 Contrast of East and West

We have noted that the basic difference between Western and Indian conceptions of the mind is that the latter makes an explicit and primary difference between mind and consciousness. This difference is so basic and crucial that it warrants some repetition when ever the context calls for it. It is pointed out, however, that a distinction between mind and consciousness is made also in the contemporary Western discussions. Mind, it is pointed out, refers to more than conscious mentation to include unconscious processes and content. However, this difference between mind and consciousness in Western usage is trivial and not fundamental as in the case of Indian psychology. In the current psychological discourse consciousness is a quality of mentation. Consciousness conveys no more than an aspect of the mind that is accessible to introspection, something which is in the focal attention of the mind. Consciousness then becomes conscious mind, a species of or phenomena of the mind. In the Indian tradition, the difference between mind and consciousness is fundamental; and it is indeed substantial. From the Indian perspective, mind and consciousness are conceptually and functionally independent; and one cannot in principle be reduced to the other. The assertion of fundamental difference between mind and consciousness by Indian thinkers has four corollary implications—(a) consciousness as-such is nonintentional, (b) there is the possibility of the existence of pure conscious states, (c) there are other avenues of knowing in addition to the ordinary sense-mediated awareness, and (4) new possibilities open up for practical application of consciousness studies.

There is sufficient justification for thinking that in the Western scholarly discussions, 'consciousness' and 'mind' are not adequately distinguished (Rao 2002).

For the most part, they are treated as synonymous and used interchangeably. If they are ever distinguished, consciousness is considered an adventitious quality or a species of mental phenomena. In the former sense, consciousness becomes an epiphenomenon (Farthing 1992). As a species of mental phenomena, conscious awareness may be thought of as something reducible to brain states and functions. Reductive exercises, however, have met with little success, unable to capture the essence of subjectivity (Nagel 1974, 1986). This epistemic asymmetry between the sensitivity and information aspects of consciousness leads to the problem of the explanatory gap (Levine 1983), as mentioned earlier. This problem in turn has the unfortunate effect on some scholars in the West of either ignoring human subjectivity all together as a legitimate topic for scientific inquiry (Rey 1988), or asserting that subjectivity is essentially beyond the reach of scientific scrutiny and rational understanding (McGinn 1991). If *consciousness* is indeed fundamental and irreducible, then, it cannot be considered a species or a subcategory of the mind. The fact that sensitivity and information are dissociable (Flanagan 1997), and the possibility that experiential sensitivity is a fundamental and irreducible phenomenon, suggest that consciousness in its subjective aspect, though associated with mental phenomena, is not intrinsic to it. Consequently, it may well fall outside the conceptual space of the mind.

In the Western formulation of dualism, there is the perennial and the seemingly unsolvable problem of the interaction between mind and body. How does a nonphysical entity like the mind interact with physical body? Any kind of causal interaction between them comes into conflict with the theory that the physical universe is a closed system and that every physical event is linked with an antecedent physical event. The possibility that a mental act can cause a physical event is pre-empted unless the mental act itself is presumed to be physical in a meaningful way.

In the Indian formulation, the problem of interaction between nonmaterial consciousness and material body is overcome by postulating that the mind is the instrumentality that provides for the necessary connection between consciousness and the brain. Such a connection is considered possible because the mind acts as the interface, the connecting link, with its special qualities, between nonphysical consciousness and the physical cognitive system. For example, the *sattva* component of *buddhi* acts as a reflecting surface to catch the illuminations of consciousness. This suggests that there might be some value in looking for new forms of matter that capture the function attributed to *sattva* in Indian thought. Again, the relation between consciousness and the mind is not causal but referential. As Mohanty (2002) points out "the opposition between causal and intentional, which plagues western thinking, does not appear in Indian thought" (p. 69).

Belief in a representational theory of knowledge, which makes a fundamental distinction between the knowing subject and the object known, is a necessary corollary flowing from the perspective which virtually equates intentionality and consciousness/mind. Also, the possibility of the existence of pure conscious states

that do not contain any phenomenal representations is ruled out a priori. The exercise of studying consciousness then becomes one of understanding the contents of consciousness and the processes that give rise to them. This strategy has worked well in some respects in the Western scientific tradition, but fell short, however, in accounting adequately for a variety of phenomena in human experience.

Cognitive psychology is now a respectable discipline with significant knowledge to its credit. Some very productive and promising programs of research have been undertaken. We now know a great deal about brain states associated with various forms of awareness. Many mysteries surrounding mental states have either been unraveled or are on their way to be resolved. We appear to be on the right track. Nevertheless, this approach inspires little confidence in the possibility of finding a reasonable understanding of subjectivity in experience. There is also the negative implication of rejecting the possibility of pure conscious states on theoretical rather than on empirical grounds.

Further, the theoretical assumptions and ontological speculations apart, we may recall that, in the Indian tradition, the existence of a pure conscious state is asserted as a fact of experience and procedures and practices to achieve such a state are prescribed. There is a kind of mental technology developed in India to apply knowledge gained in the area of consciousness for human growth and wellness. The assertion of the existence of pure conscious states is not therefore a chimerical emptiness devoid of meaning and purpose in one's life. Experience of pure consciousness is considered to be a life-changing experience. It is believed to produce significant personal transformations.

The Western conception of mind has little to offer to control the normal wanderings of the mind and transform the person to higher levels of being and achievement. The Indian tradition provides for cultivating mind to achieve states of consciousness that self-actualized persons are believed to have experienced. For example, yoga is one such discipline to cultivate mind by controlling its normal wanderings.

Patañjali defines the objective of yoga practice as the cessation of *citta vrtti*s, mental fluctuations. According to the Sāṁkhya-Yoga school, as we have noted, the mind is constantly under the pressure of internal and external influences. These influences need to be controlled so that access to consciousness as-such can be gained. The object of all the physical exercises of yoga and other preliminaries before practicing meditation is to control somatic and psychological distractions so that one can concentrate. Concentration, or *dhāraṇā*, along with *dhyāna* and *samādhi*, produces a state in which the natural wanderings of our thoughts, the fluctuations of the mind, are brought under control. As the practice of concentration and the expansion of attention are continued for prolonged periods, one is led to a standstill state where the mind's wanderings come under volitional control. When this happens, it is believed, one has direct access to consciousness as-such. Such an access is expected to enable one to experience events and to cause effects that appear anomalous from the perspective of the sensory-motor processes.

Focussing attention narrowly on an object for a prolonged period may have the effect of regulating sensory input by appropriate attentional shifts and dissociating

the mind from competing (distracting) sensory impulses. Such dissociation and withdrawal of the senses and shutting-off attention to some impulses, while focussing it on others, seems to be an essential aspect of meditation practice.

4.4.2 Two Ways of Knowing

The conceptual distinctions between 'consciousness', 'mind' and 'brain', and the notion that the mind is the interfacing instrumentality connecting consciousness and the brain warrants the assumption that there may be two distinct processes of knowing, the normal and the paranormal, cognitive and transcognitive awareness. In normal awareness, such as perceptual awareness, we postulate (1) a subject who has awareness, (2) the object of awareness, and (3) the process of awareness. The object is related to the subject through the instrumentality of sensory mediation and the processes in the brain. The resultant awareness is thus constructed to represent the world to us. In this situation, the subject and the object are seen as divided and separate, but related by the mediation of the senses and the brain's functions. What we have in our perceptions of the world are the appearances of reality in the form of representations and not the reality itself. In this mode of knowing, "things-in-themselves" remain forever "unknown."

Now, consider the possibility that a subject is in direct contact with and has unmediated access to the object. Awareness arising out of unmediated access would be an instance of what we refer to as paranormal awareness. Such awareness would indeed be different in kind from normal awareness. In normal perceptions, for example, the object is represented, and it is these representations and our reflections on them that give us "knowledge" of the object perceived. Since all of us have similar sensory systems and cortical structures that process the energy patterns emanating from the object in similar ways, we have shared representations that give us a sense of objectivity about them. Also, we make assumptions about reality, as it is represented to us, and we test these assumptions by means of other representations and thus attempt to verify and validate our assumptions about the objects of representations and the nature of reality. Our knowledge of reality is thus indirect, mediated, and in a sense inferential. On the other hand, the awareness we would have, if we had unmediated access to the object, would be direct and not represented via sensations, images, and thoughts. Instead, such unmediated awareness would acquaint us directly with the object and we would have an awareness of the thing-in-itself. This may be termed as "knowing by being." Here there is no divide between belief and behavior, cognition and conduct. It is the *saintly* state of the mind as distinguished from the *scholarly* mind.

Awareness via sensory representations is "knowing" by "*sensing*" unmediated awareness is awareness by direct *acquaintance* or awareness by *being*. The former approximates what we generally label as information. The latter may be thought of as

revelation or *realization* as distinguished from simple *understanding*. Information is cognitively processed awareness, whereas realization or revelation is awareness as-such, an experience by being. In paranormal processes, then, there is no information flow; and it is contentless awareness in the sense that it is devoid of any sensory content. When consciousness as-such is described as having no content or form, it is likely that the reference is to sensory content and form. When the relation between the mind and the object of awareness is one of *identity* rather than of *representation*, the resultant awareness is considered to be devoid of form and content.

In Indian thought, such as in *Sāṁkhya-Yoga*, it is assumed that there is a primordial existential state, the ground condition, an amorphous and undifferentiated state in which knowing and being are indistinguishable. They are seen as coalescing into a single state. With the development of the sensory and the cortical systems, knowing and being branch off and are differentiated. Awareness becomes a state of knowing instead of a state of being, and we tend to increasingly become dependent on cortically processed and sensory mediated awareness, and lose touch with awareness by being. Normal awareness is awareness of representations; paranormal awareness is awareness of reality as-such. The latter involves reflexive identity between the subject and the object. The former involves the subject's reflection and the object's representation, and the subject–object relationship then becomes *causal*.

Now, if paranormal awareness is thus conceived to be accessing consciousness as-such without sensory content, how is it different from a state where there is no awareness at all? Accustomed, as we are, to depend almost exclusively on mediated awareness, it is only natural to think that it is the only kind of awareness there is. Recall that our perceptions are only appearances, and their genuineness is tested by appeal to inter-subject consensus and other assumptions we make of reality. Awareness as-such, on the other hand, does not require such cross-validation, because it is unmediated awareness of being, a relationship of identity and direct acquaintance as distinct from descriptive awareness by representation. Its validity is reflexive, unlike cognitive awareness, which is reflectively validated. Awareness as-such, by assumption, does not involve any sensory processes, has no representational content, and yet it influences, as mentioned earlier, our lives in important ways. We may consider the lives of true saints and those who had genuine near-death and "peak" experiences that were life-transforming as examples of states of unmediated awareness or realization.

Considered in this manner, the normal and the paranormal may indeed be complementary processes. We may speculate further that the validation of our perceptual appearances as reality may itself be grounded in the paranormal. Universal values may have their origin in intuitive awareness of truth, beauty, and goodness. The basic principles underlying fundamental discoveries, the seeds of creativity, and the inspiration for artistic excellence may have intuitive genesis. Their validation via scientific formulation or evaluation by art criticism, however, is a consequence of rational reflection. In fact, we may conceive that the basic values that govern our conduct in general seem to pervade across cultures and persist over the ages are likely given to us intuitively.

4.4.3 Complementarity of East and West

We discussed how the mind is seen from the Indian perspective as connected with the brain at one end and with consciousness at the other. In the West, greater attention is paid to the brain–mind connection. In Indian thought the focus is on relating mind to consciousness. The Eastern and Western streams seem to flow in two different directions, one eastward and the other westward. However, the two together appear to contain most aspects of the mind. Therefore, if there is a confluence of the two, we may be better positioned to understand mind and consciousness in their multiple facets. James (1902/1914) and Myers (1903/1915) in their own way attempted something of this sort in the West.

In the contemporary scene, transpersonal psychologists have been pursuing this line of investigation with some vigor. Unfortunately, however, they appear to be content with drawing conceptual maps. Lacking the necessary methodological tools, they have made little progress in covering the empirical ground. One would think that parapsychologists with their feet on the ground with solid empirical data and armed with rigorous commitment to scientific methodology might be the ones to take on the leadership role. Regrettably, again, they are themselves caught in the vortex of crosscurrents. On the one hand, they are struggling unsuccessfully to shed the mindset of methodological behaviorism, a legacy of the Rhinean research paradigm. On the other hand, they are tainted with guilt by association. Parapsychology is often confused in the public mind with a host of things that the researchers in this area justifiably consider to be outside their field. There is good reason to be concerned when parapsychology is discussed along with tarot-card and tea-leaf reading, palmistry, past life regression therapies, astrology, and unidentified flying objects. Again, the widespread chicanery of the past in the dimly lit séance rooms of the entranced mediums, the mysterious ectoplasm, furniture flying, musical instruments playing by themselves, dead relatives talking and a host of similar questionable phenomena, mistakenly confused with scientific investigations in parapsychology, have made researchers in this area too defensive to pursue the implications of their research results to their logical conclusion. In any case, parapsychologists as a group have become an isolated bunch unable to connect with researchers in other related areas so that they could make a difference.

We see, however, some hopeful signs of East–West confluence in consciousness studies. There is among Western scholars studying consciousness an increasing recognition of the shallowness of their stream. There is now a greater appreciation of the significance of subjectivity and its irreducibility to brain states. There are academic psychologists like Velmans (2009), though still too few to be heard, who are willing to stick their necks out in search of new models. There are other mainstream scientists like Francisco Varela (Varela et al. 1993) who are not afraid of borrowing from the Eastern tradition to develop more workable methods for studying consciousness. Finally, there is the case of meditation research, which combines Eastern concepts and techniques with Western research tools and methods that have made significant strides in bringing the two streams together and

have given us greater appreciation of the complementarity of Eastern and Western perspectives. Together they may provide the complete understanding of the mind instead of the fragmented picture we now have (Rao 2011a).

Traveling West, we may gain glimpses of what mind is about, its processes and functions in the Western discourse. We also realize at the same time how the basic aspect of subjectivity is left little understood and how the reality and role of extraordinary experiences are much ignored. We learn that there is in the West a certain equivocation regarding the concepts "consciousness" and "mind," resulting, as we noted, in the "clouding" of consciousness, as it were. Consciousness, when recognized, is seen as causally inert and something to be no more than a qualifying adjunct of mental phenomena. All this leads us to bestow little interest in consciousness studies. Going East, we find a widely held distinction between consciousness and the mind in a very significant sense. There is an overarching concern for controlling sensory phenomena, which usually "cloud" consciousness. We see special techniques developed to gain access to states of consciousness as-such. The mind becomes the main *source* of this "clouding" and also an important *resource* to dispel it.

In the human condition, the mind is connected with the brain as well as consciousness. Consequently, it functions in two modes. In the normal mode, it gives us awareness of the world, and consciousness bestows subjectivity on it. In the paranormal mode, the mind transcends the normal sensory processes, accesses consciousness as-such, and has extraordinary experiences. It knows by being. Self-realization is an integrated state of cognition and conduct, where there is no possibility of dissociation between knowing and being. Knowing gives one understanding, and being involves realization. Understanding truth is the Western goal. Realization of truth is the Eastern ideal. The two are complementary in that knowing in the final analysis involves both understanding and realization. From the Indian perspective the goal is not merely to seek and know the truth but also to endeavor to realize it in one's being, i.e., to live by truth. Whereas in the West the search for truth is believed to be value-free, in Indian thought truth-seeking is value-loaded.

It may be of interest to note that in the final analysis the mind in both the traditions, the Western scientific tradition and the Indian religio-philosophical tradition, is reduced to nothing—nothing understood, in two different senses and for very different reasons. Recall, the main assumption in the Indian model of the mind is that it is the interface between body/brain and consciousness. However, more attention is given to the connection between mind and consciousness. This is consistent with the goal of self-realization which is none other than accessing consciousness as-such. In order to do this, the mind needs to be rendered completely quiescent. In Sāṁkhya Yoga, as we noted, the mind at self-realization disintegrates, as it were, and dissolves itself to merge in the primordial *prakṛti* of which it is an evolute.

In the Western tradition the main concern has been with the side of the mind that connects it with the brain/body. This exercise in scientific explorations of the mind finally ends up locating the mind in the bodily processes themselves. Reductionism

is a widely popular practice which considers mind as no more than what is in the brain or what the brain can do. So crucial is the mind in connecting the two realms of our being—the physical and the psychical—and yet in both traditions it ultimately reduced to nothing on its own. In the Western scientific discourse, it is regarded as a concept which is causally ineffective and psychologically irrelevant. In Indian thought, though considered as real conceptually and existentially and causally effective, the mind, when one achieves self-realization, is reduced to nothing and becomes a part of primordial matter, *prakṛti*.

Now, the two traditions, one upward moving and the other downward sliding, are engaged in partial exercises focussing on one side and ignoring the other. Psychology based exclusively on either of these approaches is ill served. What we need to keep in perspective is the twin connections of the mind to the brain/body on the one hand and to consciousness/self on the other. This would mean that we should consider the Western and Indian approaches not as either or but mutually complementary and reinforcing models. Together, they are likely to give a more complete and salubrious understanding of the true nature and destiny of humans. Study of the mind is therefore central to psychology. In Indian psychology the mind is the fulcrum of our being and behavior.

Inasmuch as the mind with its connection to the body influences and is influenced by the bodily states, Western studies in physiological psychology are quite relevant. However, they become extremely limited in scope and application unless they pay equal attention to the mental processes that influence the bodily states and processes. What may be even more significant in this context is that the mental states in addition to influencing bodily processes may help in gaining self-realization and for accessing consciousness as-such, which opens up enormous new potentials that are essentially left out now in the mainstream Western psychological discourse.

Chapter 5
Self, Person, and Personality

The individual human being, the person, is the basic subject for studies in psychology, even as groups and cultures are the main subject matter for the disciplines of sociology and anthropology respectively. In Indian psychology the person, we may recall, is a unique composite of consciousness, mind, and body. Consciousness is the source of subjectivity and the very base of one's experience of being, knowing, and feeling. Body is the source of natural appetites, which translate themselves into desires, urges, cravings, and longings in the mind. The mind in association with consciousness manifests the empirical self, which appropriates the desires and their consequences in the form of experiences embedded in one's wishes, expectations, and aspirations. Such an appropriation results in a constellation of phenomena considered as mental. The term that signifies the person in Indian psychology is *jīva*. *Jīva* as a psychological concept is different from *puruṣa*, a metaphysical entity. It has unique connotation which is often lost in discussions that equate *jīva* with *puruṣa* or *ātman.* We shall see how these concepts evolved and what they have come to mean in different systems of Indian thought.

5.1 Theories of the "Self" in Indian Thought

In the Indian tradition, the views on the nature of the self are varied. We find interesting discussions in all schools of Indian thought. In the Hindu view *ātman* roughly corresponds to the self. However, *ātman* refers to different things in the context of the person, such as the agent of thought and action, and as an abstract principle of sentience. Among the Indian theories of the self, there are three main strands. One strand is prominently represented, on the one hand, by the Buddhist denial of substantive self other than changing but continuous stream of consciousness and, by the outright rejection of the notion of self by the Cārvāka materialists on the other. The latter had some impact on the classical Indian thought but it failed to be a significant part of Indian tradition. Therefore, it is ignored in the present discussion. The second strand is represented by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and

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Jaina systems which do not consider consciousness and self as identical. The third strand consisting of Vedānta and Sāṁkhya-Yoga schools equate "consciousness" and the "self" as one and the same. Thus Buddhism and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika hold diametrically opposite views, one denying reality to the self and the other upholding it. Vedānta and Yoga appear to subscribe to a middle position equating the person/self with embodied consciousness, as distinguished from the *self* considered as consciousness as-such. The differences between them are to a significant extent due to the different connotations they ascribe to the concept "self."

Briefly, *ātman* in the sense of *self* is consciousness as-such, which makes it possible for one to have experience. *Ātman* is also seen as the subject who experiences the world around. What is implied here is a sharp dichotomy of the subject versus object; everything that is experienced is an object; that which has experiences of all sorts is the *self*. A well-known Vedāntic text called the *Dṛg-dṛśya Viveka* (n.d./1931) refers to the *ātman* as the *dṛk*, meaning the one that sees, as opposed to *dṛśya*, meaning all the objects that are seen, and by extension of the meaning that which is heard, touched, felt, or otherwise experienced. Such characterization of the *self* excludes the body, one's possessions, social roles that people ordinarily identify with their selves—all of which can be "seen" or are open to observation. It also excludes "objects of thought" such as one's ideas, beliefs, and even dreams that are experienced, can be thought of, and described. Unlike in Descartes, who equated the mind or the "thinker" with his or her thoughts, in the Upaniṣadic tradition, the *self* is neither the thinker nor thoughts, but an experiencer beyond thoughts. The *self* is experienced in a state of awareness that is emptied of all thoughts. Thus, it signifies a state of pure consciousness. In it there is no subject/object split, or a subtle distinction between an "I" and "my thoughts" which continually appear in and disappear from one's mind while one is awake or dreaming. This state, often called the Fourth state, is essentially indescribable. Yet, for the sake of convenience, it is characterized as a composite state of "existence, consciousness, and bliss" (*sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*).

The typical method to help attain such a state is briefly described in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* Upaniṣad as "listening to," or studying, the Upaniṣadic theses about this issue and deep contemplation on it. The experience of the *ātman* in the Fourth state is said to reveal the principle of selfsameness that underlies the continually changing images of oneself throughout the span of life. The value of such "self-realization" lies mainly in making it redundant to chase ever-new images of the self, and thereby being exempt from the emotional ups and downs that accompany the successes and failures in attaining the perpetually revised images of the self.

In regard to the concept of *jīva*, as in the case of several important concepts in the Indian intellectual tradition, the Upaniṣads contain the seeds that evolved into rich and complex theories over the centuries. *Jīva*, which literally means a living being, is often used in Indian thought as a technical term that is the closest to what is called "person" in contemporary psychology. *Jīva* is often mentioned in several Upaniṣads. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, for instance, uses the term *jīva* to designate a human being as an integral part of the cosmic order. In the course of instructing his son Śvetaketu, the sage Uddālaka Āruṇi gives several examples suggesting that

in essence every human individual is a living being and an integral part of the universe around him. To express the idea that human being is an integral part of the universe he uses metaphors of a drop of honey that is indistinguishable from other drops in a pot of honey, or drops of water in the sea, or a grain of salt dissolved in water (*Chāndogya*, 6.9–13). In trying to make a point that all human beings, like all forms of life, are derived from the same single source of Being, Uddālaka Āruṇi says that tigers, lions, wolves, boars and even worms, flies, and gnats are all derived from the same Being (*Chāndogya*, 6.10.2). To illustrate the same point, the Upaniṣad mentions organisms born from eggs (i.e., reptiles and birds) and from sprouts (varieties of plants), as well as those born from another living beings (implying mammals), asserting that all of these are derived from one and same Being. The *Chāndogya* (2.7.2) also mentions that the human being (*puruṣa*) is a superior object to meditate upon after the goat, the sheep, the cow, and the horse. Radhakrishnan (1953/1994) interprets this to man that "[t]he human being is the culmination of animal development" (p. 363). It should be clear from this account that, according to the Upaniṣadic world view, *jīva*s or persons are to be seen as integral part of the entire range of the animate world—and even the inanimate world of salt and water, for that matter. In this respect, the Upaniṣadic view of human nature goes even beyond the Darwinian view in placing humans as integral part of the animal kingdom.

In trying to describe the nature of the living principle that resides in human beings, Uddālaka Āruṇi asks his son Śvetaketu to look for the principle of life inside the tiny seed of fig tree (*Chāndogya*, 6.12.1–2). When the son claims that it is invisible, the father reminds the son that the essence of *jīva*, a living being, although so tiny as to be invisible, is capable of growing to a large size. Expressing a similar view, the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (5.9) says that although the *jīva* appears to be tinier than a hair divided a 100-fold, it has infinite potential. In the very next verse it says that the *jīva* is neither male, nor female, nor even neutral, thus recognizing the need to view personhood, like the principle of life itself, beyond the considerations of gender. The same consideration of gender neutrality applies to the term *puruṣa*, which is often used as a synonym of *jīva*, in traditional Sanskrit usage, as in many Indian languages derived from Sanskrit, to designate only humans of the male gender.

In a famous dialogue of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.4.1–5), the sage Yājñavalkya is shown as trying to explain to his wife Maitreyī the disposition of his properties between her and his other wife Kātyāyanī on the eve of his retirement from active life of householder. The talk about the family's wealth prompts Maitreyī to ask an important question—as to what use wealth might be in attaining immortality, which is a valued goal to which many of us aspire. Yājñavalkya answers that no amount of wealth could ever offer immortality; even the wealthiest and the most powerful of persons on earth must ultimately die. Maitreyī's quest for immortality leads Yājñavalkya to explain the most important thing in life that is worth attaining and preserving forever. He points out that what many people love the most—wealth, spouse, children, status in society, or even gods that we worship —are not loved for their own sake, but for the sake of our own self (*ātman*). That is

why, he says, *self/ātman* is the most important thing that we should try hard to understand. Then he goes ahead to suggest that listening to the insights of the Upaniṣads in this connection and deeply contemplating the same as the way to understand the nature of the *self*.

Self is a topic of greatest interest for the Upaniṣads; it is the issue of highest importance which they enjoin the readers to study (*ātmetyevopāsīta*: *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 1.4.7). Over the millennia, the exegesis—i.e., the interpretive study—of the Upaniṣads has tried to elucidate this central theme in various ways. The Advaita branch of the Vedānta school is perhaps the most well known in this regard. At the same time, self is also a core concept in many other systems of Indian thought which stoutly defend the existence of an unchanging self persisting in the midst of changes that surround the person. However, the concept of self takes various connotations leading to a variety of interpretations of *jīva* and the person by different systems. Again in Indian thought there are other systems which roundly repudiated the concept of self and consequently espoused a different notion of the person. Buddhism, as mentioned, is the most prominent among them.

The Upaniṣads laid the foundation for other more specific ideas about the nature of persons that became the basis for elaborate theories over the centuries. The *Praśna Upaniṣad* (4.9), for example, describes the *puruṣa* as the seer (*draṣṭā*), the toucher (*spraṣṭā*), the hearer (*śrotā*), the smeller (*ghrātā*), the taster (*rasayitā*), the thinker (*mantā*), the knower (*boddhā*), the doer (*kartā*), and the thinking self (*vijñānātmā*) (see Radhakrishnan 1953/1994, p. 663). While the description in terms of sensory functions such as seeing and hearing is common sense, the list includes characteristics like knowing and doing that have special significance in the conceptualization of personhood. The *Maitrī Upaniṣad* (6.7), for instance, characterizes the person as a self (*ātmā*) who is conscious (*cetā*), thinks (*mantā*), acts (*kartā*), and enjoys (*ānandayitā*). Elsewhere (in 3.2) the same *Upaniṣad* clarifies that the *puruṣa* is one who enjoys/suffers as a result of his good/bad deeds (*karmaphalir abhibhūyamāna*). These ideas are repeated in various forms in several Upaniṣads. The *Śvetāśvātara* (5.7–12), describes some of the most crucial characteristics of the individual *jīva*: as one with a sense of self or ego and a capacity for imagination (*saṁkalpa-ahaṁkāra-samanvito*), endowed with an intellect (*buddhi*), an agent of his deeds (*karma-kartā*), and enjoyer of their fruits (*upabhoktā*).

In the Upaniṣads the concept *self* (*ātman*) tends to become closely associated with the concepts of *puruṣa* and *jīva* variously designating the individual person. Sometime the term *ātman* is used in conjunction with other words that indicate the main features of the person: as a living self (*jīvātmā*), as embodied self (*śārīra ātmā*) or material self (*bhūtātmā*). These ideas provide the basis for the model of the person as a composite of body–mind–consciousness adopted in this book. Such characterization further illustrates the idea that the Upaniṣadic view of personhood insists that persons are fully integrated with nature. During the course of development of the typical Indian perspective on personhood, the characterization of the person as an individual who knows (*jñātā*), acts (*kartā*), and enjoys and suffers (*bhoktā*) became a central and crucial theme.

The *ātman*/*self* concept in the Upaniṣads permits three basic interpretations, as we pointed out earlier. First, *Ātman*, as in *Brahman*, appears to refer to reality as such. In that sense, it is the universal or Supreme Self. Second, *ātman* is seen as the sentient principle that enables one to be conscious, to know, feel, enjoy, and suffer. It refers to pure consciousness or consciousness as-such. Third, *ātman* refers to the individual agentic self, the one who knows, feels, and does things. The third sense is possibly the most appropriate sense of the self as *jīva*. The above three senses may be distinguished as (1) Self as Brahman, the Supreme Self, (2) *self* as the principle of sentience behind each person, consciousness as-such, and (3) self in the sense of *jīva* (person), who knows, acts, feels, and so on.

5.2 The Concept of *Anattā* and the Denial of the Self in Buddhism

The Pali word *anattā* may be literally translated as no-self. It constitutes one of the fundamental tenets of Buddhism, which historically arose in opposition to, or as a rebellion against, the Upaniṣadic doctrines. To put this in historical perspective, we may appreciate the possibility that usage of terms such as *jīvātman* is likely to give the impression that the *ātman* is the same as the *jīva*, which is confusing since we are told that the *ātman* is permanent and unchanging while the *jīva* is continually changing in all its aspects. Insofar as, for most people, the origin of the idea of the "self" is in their own sense of "me" and "mine," a philosophical affirmation of a concept such as the *ātman* is likely to lead to an assumption that the "me" or ego is something permanent. This, in turn would further entrench the common tendency to aggrandize the ego and the pursuit for possessions that would presumably last forever—like the unchangeable *ātman*. From Gautama Buddha's viewpoint, such a situation would be disastrous, since nothing in life is permanent, and the demise of anything loved by the person naturally implies suffering.

The idea that everything in the world is impermanent is a fundamental assumption in the Buddhist worldview. Any "thing" that we perceive as a stable and lasting entity, from the Buddhist perspective, is but a process in the continually changing phenomena that surround us. Such a view of the world should not sound strange to us in this day and age, since modern science shows us that the apparently inert and unchanging things such are rocks are composed of atoms and of electrons constantly revolving around nuclei; things in the world are in a perpetual flux. From the Buddhist perspective, an entity that we perceive as a person (*puggala*) is constantly in flux, although we perceive it as stable and lasting. More specifically, a person is not a single stable entity, but rather an aggregate of five elements (*pañca khandas*), all of which are impermanent. As explained in Chap. 4, these elements are: (i) material form (*rūpa*), (ii) feeling or sensation (*vedanā*), (iii) perception (*saññā*), (iv) mental dispositions arising from impressions left behind by past experience and behavior (*saṁkhāra*), and (v) reason or intelligence (*viññāna*).

In *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (xxii, 85, in Warren 1922, pp. 138–145) the sage Sāriputta argues that given that each of the phenomena such as sensation and perception that constitute the ego are transitory, the ego simply cannot be a permanent entity. In the famous dialogue between the sage Nāgasena and king Milinda (*Milindapañha*, in Warren 1922, pp. 129–135), Nāgasena argues that the name given to a person such as Nāgasena does not indicate a single and selfsame entity, even as the name chariot does not indicate a single unified entity but simply an aggregate of separate parts such as the wheels, axle, poles, reins, and so on. Entities we designate by naming a class to which they belong—a chariot, person, ego, or what have you—are mere names, not real and lasting things.

A perspective such as the Buddhist one which denies the unity and sameness of person or self must answer what holds them together, so to speak. Is a person no more than a mere bundle of bones and sinews, sensations and perceptions? Are all phenomena in the universe totally unconnected to one another? If they are, then the universe must be simply a chaos, not a cosmos. Notwithstanding his denial of selfsameness of persons Gautama adopts, however, the view of the world as a system or cosmos and not chaos where anything can happen. Although Gautama was radically opposed to the Upaniṣadic view of Ātman/Brahman as the unifying principle of persons and the universe, he nevertheless shared with the Upaniṣadic thinkers a belief in the Doctrine of Karma. Various aspects of this doctrine are explicitly discussed in several places in the classical writings of early Buddhism.[1] This doctrine presupposes an essential lawfulness of events in physical, mental as well as moral spheres. This belief implies a causal principle, and, in Gautama's view, it is called the "law of dependent origination" or the "law of conditioned genesis" (*paṭicca samuppāda* in Pali, or *pratītya samutpāda* in Sanskrit). Although it is neither possible nor necessary to give a detailed discussion of this law here, a sketch of the same can be provided.

According to the law of dependent origination, the causal chain begins with ignorance, meaning mistaken view of the self—that "I" am such and such being. This mistaken sense of self initiates intentional actions or karma, which leave behind traces that fructify like seeds under appropriate conditions. It is from the unfructified traces of past actions that mental activities arise, which in turn lead to the formation of a mind–body complex of the human being. From this complex arises the field of the six senses, which provide sensory impressions. These impressions lead to feelings, which in turn lead to craving, grasping of objects craved for and the resultant unfolding of the life cycle or the process of becoming. This process entails birth, aging and dying, which results in grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation, and despair. To put it in brief, suffering thus results from a belief in the existence of a self, or the sense of "me" and the "mine."

[1]For an excellent selection of excerpts from the major classical texts of early Buddhism (Theravāda) on several important issues such as the Doctrine of Karma of that of no-self, see Henry Clarke Warren's *Buddhism in Translations* published by Harvard University Press in 1922.

It should be clear from the above that, according to the early Buddhist perspective, although no such thing as a permanent self exists, a causal chain of events provides continuity in the ongoing course of life. It is necessary to remember in this context that, according to an implicit assumption of the Doctrine of Karma, nothing happens as a happenstance; all events in mind and body are causally determined. Moreover, all events or actions have inevitable moral consequences; good things lead to good consequences and so on. The fact of birth itself is explained in terms of actions of past life that have not yet resulted in their natural consequences, good or bad. But then, if there is no self, who is it that enjoys the pleasant consequences of good actions? Insofar as the Doctrine of Karma implies the principle of justice, is it not necessary that the *same* person who did something bad in the past life cycle be reborn to suffer the bad consequences of those bad actions? The idea of rebirth would imply something permanent in persons that survive death, would it not?

Such questions were in fact asked and answered in the course of dialogues between the Buddha and various other characters in the classical Buddhist literature. The answers basically suggest that what is reborn is not a permanent soul or a self, but rather the collection of traces of past karma of which the consequences were not played out at the end of the previous life cycle. In the course of the cycle of birth and death, it is not necessary that the *same* person be born again; in fact nothing remains the same about a person. The bundle of karma that results in the birth of person continues to change as some of the unfructified traces of past karma result in their legitimate consequences and new traces accumulate as there are new rounds of activities. Thus, life is a chain of events and the person is a collective name for the continuing life cycle; he or she does not remain the same either within a given life cycle, or across a series of life cycles.

Further, the doctrine of rebirth is likely to give the impression that it is the *ātman* that undergoes the cycle of life and death rather than the *jīva*—and this is confusing since the everlasting Ātman/Brahman is said to be beyond birth and death. Aside from such confusions, Gautama Buddha did not believe in anything permanent in the perpetual flux of the phenomenal world. Besides, Gautama strongly disapproved the sacrifice of animals practiced by the followers of Vedic religion of his times, and attempted to bring about a fundamental change in the tradition by opposing many—although not all—of its fundamental beliefs. At any rate, rejection of the fundamental principle of the eternal Ātman/Brahman became one of the central features of Buddha's teachings.

To help understand the concept of *anattā* it will be useful to remember the famous legend in the life of Gautama, the prince, who gave up the wealth and power upon seeing an old man, a sick man, and a corpse. The basic conclusion of this story is the thesis that life and health, which most of us take for granted, do not indeed last forever; change and decay are unavoidable facts of life. In Gautama's view, everything in the world is in flux, and to think otherwise and believe that something is permanent leads to suffering. To assume that there is something in human beings (*pudgala*) such as the *ātman* (*attā* in Pāli) that would remain unchanged is misleading; it would only add to misery.

Thus, Buddhism with its theory of momentariness (*kṣaṇikavāda*) asserts that reality is in a state of continuous flux with no permanent entities in our experience over and above the constantly changing events. Consequently, there can be no enduring self. The self is considered no other than the "aggregate" or "bundle" of ever-changing bodily and mental states. At the same time, however, the "self" as "person" and what it stands for are variously conceived in the major schools of Indian Buddhism after Gautama the Buddha. There are at least three major strands here represented by the theories prominently championed by Vasubandhu (fourth century CE), Candrakīrti (seventh century CE), and by the Pudgalavāda representing a cluster of minor Buddhist schools. The "no-self" theory (*anātma vāda*) is adapted, modified, and amended based on their axiological concerns and metaphysical assumptions.

Briefly, all Buddhists more or less agree that self as a permanent, changeless entity is nonexistent. They all trace the conception of the self to the mind and bodily states (*skandha*s). However, there are a variety of interpretations of Buddha's teachings on the matter of what the person actually is. The orthodox Theravāda view is that the self is no other than a continuum of collections of aggregates (*skandha*s). The Pudgalavāda considers that the self is simply indescribable in that, though its conception is dependent on the aggregates, it is neither the same nor different from the aggregates. However, self enjoys ultimate existence like fire does as distinguished from fuel. Vasubandhu argues that self does not have substantive existence, but its existence is substantially established inasmuch as the conception of the self is dependent on the aggregates, which are substances. In this sense, persons have ultimate existence. Candrakīrti denies ultimate existence to persons by asserting that those phenomena or entities that lack identity are nonexistent and that anything that is caused and conditioned cannot have ultimate existence (for a detailed discussion of the concept of person in Buddhism, see Rao 2011b, pp. 440–446).

It would seem that the concept of "self" in Buddhism refers to *jīva*, even though Buddhism equates it with *ātman* in an attempt to reject its permanence. Gautama's focus was on the empirical self. He had little interest in the metaphysical self, the *self* (*ātman*) and Self (*Ātman*) as we find in Hindu thought. We may not be unjustified in saying that Buddhism by conceiving self as changing and impermanent in the sense of *jīva* and rejecting it as an entity simply ignores Self (*Ātman*) and *self* (*ātman*). In other words, the self Buddhism rejects as an enduring entity is in the sense of *jīva* and not *ātman* or *Ātman*. The concern of Buddhism more or less is with the empirical self; it has very little to do with the metaphysical self.

5.3 Assertion of *Ātman* in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika

Nyāya and its twin system Vaiśeṣika take a totally different stand from Buddhism and assert unambiguously the existence of *ātman* in the sense of *self*. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinkers are realists. According to them, there are real things out

in the world that correspond to our perceptions of them. Their existence is independent of our knowing them. Not only are the objects of our experience independent of our thoughts and knowledge of them, but they are also independent of each other. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas subscribe to a pluralism of sorts. As we noted in the previous chapter, the universe in this view is composed of nine substances called *dravya*s. Mind and self are among the nine. In addition to substances, there are qualities, which are just as real as the substances. The substances exist independently of qualities, which abide in substances. A quality is that "which has substance for its substratum" (*Vaiśeṣika-Sūtra*, 1.1.16). The qualities of pain and pleasure, desire and hatred, volition and consciousness are special to the *self*, which is called the *ātman*. To these Praśastapāda adds virtue (*dharma*), vice (*adharma*), and mental disposition (*saṁskāra*). The *self* (*ātman*) is nonmaterial and eternal. There are infinite number of *selves*. The *self*, however, is not an object of direct perception. Its existence is known inferentially. According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinkers, the *self*, mind, and consciousness are different. The *self* and the mind are substances, but consciousness is a quality which inheres in the *self*. The mind by itself does not possess the quality of consciousness.

In Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika system, the *self* is permanent and enduring. It is incorporeal but a substantive entity. This position puts them squarely in opposition to Buddhism. Consequently, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinkers like Vātsyāyana, Uddyotakara, Udayana, and Vācaspati Miśra provide extensive argumentation in attempts to rebut and refute the notions of impermanence and nonsubstantiality of the *self* espoused by the Buddhist thinkers.

What are the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika reasons for asserting the existence of the *self* as an enduring and substantive nonmaterial entity? According to Gautama, "Desire, Aversion, Effort, Pleasure, Pain and Cognition are indicatives of the Soul" (*Nyāya Sūtras* 1-1-10, see Jha 1984, Vol. 1, p. 217). We may infer the existence of the *self* from the fact that we desire and act to gain pleasure and avoid pain and suffering. The above mentioned so-called signs, as Uddyotakara points out in his *Nyāya-Vārtika*, are the identifiable characteristics of the *self*.

Why do desires and cognitions imply the existence of the *self*? In his commentary on *Nyāya Sūtra* (1.1.10), Vātsyāyana (Jha 1984) gives the following reason among others for inferring the existence of the self from the presence of volitions, feelings, and cognitions in us. It is a natural tendency for a person to have a desire to acquire objects, which are pleasurable. Inasmuch as one has multiple experiences, each unique, some pleasurable and some painful, she needs to analyze and synthesize those cognitions that are indeed related to the pleasurable or painful objects. The volition to get that which is pleasurable and avoid the painful is not possible without a synthesizer. The *self* is the synthesizer, the knower, doer and the enjoyer. The person 'x' cannot remember the experiences of 'y', because 'x' is different from 'y.' Again, 'x' cannot relate the experience gained at time t_1 with the experience at time t_2 unless 'x' is the same person at times t_1 and t_2. Therefore, the argument goes, we must presume the existence of the *self* that endures as one and the same across time. In other words, the manifest personal identity presupposes the existence of an enduring *self*. Vātsyāyana comments: "The Soul having experienced

pleasure by coming into contact with a certain kind of things, whenever, in the future, he happens to see a thing of that same kind, he wishes to acquire that thing; and this wish to acquire is possible only in one who, while remaining one and the same, perceives several things; as it arises from his remembrance of a previous perception; it is thus that Desire becomes an indicative (a sign or proof) of the Soul. No such desire would be possible [if there were not one and the same agent to cognise and to recognise the thing, and] if there were only a series of distinct cognitions, each pertaining to its own distinct object; for the recognition of one cognition by another cognition would be as possible as the recognition by one body of the experiences of another body" (Jha 1984, Vol. 1, p. 217).

Thus, according to Nyāya, memory presupposes the existence of the enduring *self*. Vātsyāyana points out that (1) memory can be only of those things that are objects of cognition, (2) memory is person-centered in that one does not recollect items of another person's experience, (3) and memory is always the recognition of one's past. Therefore, it is argued, it should be the same entity that had the experience in the past, which is presently recalled. The state of experiencing something and the state of recalling it are two distinctive events connected by the selfsame person, without whom an event of past experience cannot be an item of present recall/recognition.

Buddhists would argue that no such enduring *self* is necessary to account for the sense of selfsameness and recognition. Conscious events such as cognitions, though momentary and passing states, constitute a coherent and continuous stream in which one conscious event leads to another. As mentioned earlier, the doctrine of dependent origination (*pratītya samutpāda*) is used to explain the continuity of successive events in terms of inherent causal links, as we have noted.

Nyāya thinkers object to this and point out that there are regular discontinuities in the so-called conscious stream by such breaks as in deep sleep. Therefore, it cannot be said, that there is a continuous and unbroken stream of consciousness. Further, Uddyotakara argues that two events occurring at two different points of time, though related as cause and effect, are completely different like the successive experiences of two different persons. Consequently, just as one person cannot remember the experiences of another, so also two different time-displaced events in one's experience cannot be related in one's memory without the presence of one and the same *self* at the two points in time. All activities, it is pointed out, presuppose a subject who acts. Inasmuch as remembering is an activity, there must be a subject engaged in that activity. Therefore, without the *self*, remembering is not possible. Uddyotakara says: "Since the different cognitions are each restricted to its object and are different from each other, the nonself theorist cannot account for recognitive *synthesis*. Therefore, that which does the recognitive synthesis is the self" (see Jha 1984). Thus, the unity, coherence, and mutual relatedness present in our cognitive activity presuppose a continuing *self*.

A Buddhist may argue that A's experiences cannot be recalled by B, because there is no causal connection between the two, whereas B can recall his past experiences, which are causally related. This argument is rebutted by Vācaspati Miśra. He points out that the kind of causal relationship suggested by Buddhists

cannot account for the kind of relationship needed between the event experienced and later recalled. "Memory is such," he writes, "the earlier and later cognitions have the same agent, for both are recognized as having the same object. Those that do not have the same agent are not so recognized…." (*Tātparyaṭīkā*, 216; see Miśra 1925). Thus, we need to postulate an enduring *self* to make sense of memory. The Buddhist contention that the required causal connection is provided by the accompanying stream of consciousness is also questioned. The so-called stream of consciousness is not a separate entity. The only basis for presuming the existence of such a stream is the postulated causal links between events. If the stream is considered a separate and independent entity, it is as good as admitting an enduring entity. Therefore, the conception of the stream of consciousness fares no better than the causal explanation of connectedness of desperate items implied in the experience of recognition.

According to Uddyotakara, unlike many other *Nyāya* thinkers, the *self* is not merely an inferential entity but it is also an object of internal perception. He argues that the self-reveals itself in one's experiences of the I-ness and the ego sense. The access to the awareness of the *self* is first-person based unlike the knowledge of the objects of the world, which is third-person oriented. *Self* in this view is revealed as a first-person datum.

Notwithstanding the interesting debates between Buddhist and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinkers on the "self," it would seem that the "self" means two different things to them. As we discussed, the Buddhists are primarily dealing with self in the sense of *jīva* and only secondarily as *ātman*. However, in Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, the *self* refers to *ātman*. There would be little disagreement that the person is indeed an ever-changing subject. However, whether there is anything beyond the manifest changing person that is enduring is a matter of serious disagreement.

We may also note that for N–V thinkers *self* is not simply the principle of sentience, but is also the agent of action and the experiencing person. This renders the N–V conception of *ātman* somewhat different from the Sāṁkhya-Yoga conception of *puruṣa.*

5.4 The Affirmation of the Self in Vedānta

We find the third strand of theories of self in Vedānta and Sāṁkhya-Yoga schools. Again, in Vedānta there are two main streams represented by Śaṅkara's Advaita and Rāmānuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita systems. Both of them belong to Vedānta tradition and draw their inspiration from the Upaniṣadic thought.

The Advaita doctrine of the *Brahman* is embedded in the quest to find out what is really real. Unlike the Buddhists to whom change and impermanence underlie all reality, Śaṅkara assumes that the ultimately real has to be changeless and permanent. It is argued that the very fact of change and becoming suggests that which changes cannot be the real being, because to be real is to be enduring and permanent. This pursuit to find the permanent amidst the changing phenomena leads

the Advaita thinkers to identify the *Brahman* as the only one eternal, all-pervasive, self-revealing, and changeless reality. Briefly, the *Brahman* at the level of the person is identical with the Self (*Ātman*). The Self underlies the multiplicity of conscious states and at the same time it is identical with the Supreme Self, the *Brahman*, which is the undifferentiated subjectivity (consciousness) underlying all reality. At the level of the person, the self appears limited because of its association with the mind and body, the products of *avidyā*, the primeval ignorance. Śaṅkara interprets the Upaniṣadic statement "Thou art that" (*tat tvam asi*) as the assertion of unqualified identity between the *self* (*ātman*) in the person and the *Brahman*, the Supreme Self.

In Advaita view, *self* is self-revealing. It cannot be doubted because it constitutes the very essence of the person who doubts. "The existence of the witnessing-self is self-proved and cannot therefore be denied" (*Śāṅkara-Vedānta-Sūtra-Bhāṣya*, II.2.28; see Śaṇkara 1890). Its existence is a matter of self-revelation. What are its characteristics? How we may describe it? According to Śaṅkara, the best way to grasp the Self is to strip it of all the contents and objective determinations we experience by a process of elimination because it is the antithesis of sensorially given and understood qualities. The process of denial of all attributes leads us to say that the Self is "not this and not this" (*neti neti*). The attributes that are denied to the Self include all categories of relation of the external world, gross elements of the body, the internal states generated by the senses and the mind as well as all the vital functions that sustain life in the person. Thus, the Self is not the body, the senses, and the mind. The Self is also not a knowing agent. An agent is subject to change, and a changing self cannot be real. The Self is neither the subject nor the object of knowledge.

Though *Brahman* is the one supreme principle underlying all reality, undifferentiated and nondual, reality in the human condition appears differentiated as subjects and objects located in time and space. This is so because in the existential situation, the *Ātman*, the Supreme Being, resides as individual consciousness in the abode of *jīva*. The *jīva* is the embodied self; it is Consciousness (*Ātman*) limited by the mind, intellect, senses, and body.

In Advaita, the *jīva* is conceived as being encased and covered at different levels by *kośas* (sheaths). They are the *annamaya-kośa* (representing the body and the material nourishment it needs), *prāṇamaya-kośa* (the life sustaining vital breath), *manomaya-kośa* (the mental processing system), *vijñānamaya-kośa* (the discriminating and individuating intellect), and *ānandamaya-kośa* (the surround of happiness and bliss). The first *kośa* refers to the gross body. The next are the life sustaining and knowledge processing principles. *Manomaya-kośa* relates to the *manas* and *vijñānamaya-kośa* refers to the functions of *ahaṁkāra* and *buddhi* in the mind. The last, *ānadamaya-kośa*, is the state of bliss that the *jīva* seeks and strives for. *Jīva* comprises of the sum total of the ever-changing and multifarious conscious states and the processes that give rise to them. In the *jīva*, consciousness is surrounded by the limiting adjuncts of the mind–body complex. The consciousness in the *jīva* is, however, none other than the reflection of the Supreme Consciousness itself.

The person is thus, in Advaita view, a curious combination of both reality and appearance. Insofar as the *Ātman* constitutes the ground, the person is real; but in its phenomenal aspect with its stream of experience, the individual is mere appearance. The phenomenal consciousness as it manifests in our mental states, according to Śaṅkara, is directed toward one object or another, whereas consciousness-as-such, the Supreme Consciousness, is pure and objectless. In other words, it is nonintentional.

The *ātman* within us is the transcendental subject, "Self," whereas the self of the manifest experience is the empirical subject, "me." The latter is subject to change, unlike the changeless transcendental Self (*paramātman*). The *Ātman* is pure cognition; the empirical self is seen as an agency actively engaged, striving toward one end or another. As Śaṅkara states in his commentary on *Brahma-Sūtra* (II.3.40), the *jīva* is essentially an agent of all activities. Its agency dwells in the *upādhi*s, the limitations imposed by *buddhi* (mind). According to Gauḍapada's (1987) *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā* (III.48), the *jīva* is a product of imagination and is capable of further imagination. In Advaita a clear distinction is made between *ātman* not encumbered by the mind and the embodied consciousness in *jīva*. The former is called *sākṣin* or witness consciousness. *Jīva* is seen as distinct and different from *sākṣin* (witness consciousness). Whereas the *jīva* goes through the illusory experiences enacted by the mind, *sākṣin* is a mere witness. The *sākṣin* is not a product of experience, but is presupposed by it. It is the continuing witness of the changing mental life of the embodied being. There are slightly different views among the Advaita thinkers about the relation between *jīva* (individual consciousness) and *sākṣin* (witness consciousness). The essential difference between the two appears to be that the mind (*antaḥkaraṇa*) is the *attribute* of individual consciousness (*jīva*), whereas it is merely a *limitation* (*upādhi*) of witness consciousness (*sākṣin*).

We thus find that consciousness is equated with the self. The self, however, refers to three different things, as we noted earlier. First, self refers to Brahman, the Supreme Self, which as we designate it is the Self. Second, it refers to *sākṣin*, the witnessing *self*. Third, there is the empirical self, the *jīva*. Thus, we have the Self (*Brahma*), *self* (*sākṣin*), and *jīva* (empirical self).

It is important to note that in Advaita the individual person is neither part of, nor different from, nor a modification of the supreme consciousness. It is the *Ātman* itself shrouded in *avidyā* or ignorance. The *upādhi*s, the mental processes within us, limit the understanding of the *Ātman.* According to the theory of limitation developed by the later Advaita thinkers, known as the *avacchedavāda*, the individual person (*jīva*) is the *Ātman* limited by his mind. There is also another theory called *pratibimbavāda* to account for the relationship between the individual and the supreme consciousness, according to which the individual consciousness is a reflection of the supreme consciousness in the mirror of *avidyā* (ignorance). The reflection is a function of the state of the individual. Like the reflection of a person in a pool of water varies depending on the state of the water, whether it is clear or dirty, calm or turbulent, so does the reflection of Supreme Consciousness in an individual self varies depending on the state of the *avidyā* of the individual person in whom it is reflected. Śaṅkara himself used the simile of reflection. Commenting

on *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.12) Śaṅkara points out that, as the reflections of sun and moon on water are mere appearance, so are the individual selves (personal consciousness). They are different images, reflections of the one reality *Ātman* in *avidyā.* They are not truly real. On overcoming *avidyā*, the reflections cease and the true consciousness alone remains.

5.5 Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja

Like Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja asserts that the *self* is different from the body, senses, and the mind and that it is real and eternal. However, for Rāmānuja, the *self* (*ātman*) in the person (*jīva*) is not a "vain variation" of the absolute *Brahman*. The *self*, though a mode of *Brahman*, is not *Brahman* per se. The relationship between the two is not one of identity. Any assertion of absolute identity between the individual *self* and the *Brahman* is worthless, argues Rāmānuja, because such an assertion amounts to no more than a tautology, one that completely ignores the individual person.

In Viśiṣṭādvaita, the *self* is the agent of action, as in the case of the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* system. *Self* is the knower, doer, and enjoyer. It is atomic, changeless, and devoid of any parts. Self-consciousness and wisdom are its attributes. While the *Brahman* is infinite and all encompassing, the *self* is infinitely small. However, it is pervasive in that it is capable of penetrating into nonconscious material substances.

While Śaṅkara is an uncompromising nondualist asserting the existence of a single all-pervasive absolute self, the *Brahman*, Rāmānuja subscribes to the doctrine of plurality of *selves*. Inasmuch as pain and pleasure afflict different persons differently, he asserts, there must be different *selves* among different individuals. Though the self is similar to *Brahman*, it is not the same because the latter comprises of all the *selves* collectively. Thus, Rāmānuja advocates qualified monism by asserting the all encompassing Brahman, the one Supreme Reality, comprises of all the individual *selves* as well as the material objects in the universe, which are equally real. The *selves* and the material things are related to Brahman as attributes to a substance.

We find Rāmānuja, like Śaṅkara, suggesting that the individual selves suffer limitations despite their intrinsic resemblance to Brahman because of ignorance and lack of correct knowledge (*avidyā*). It is the association of the *self* with the material body that brings about the manifest limitations.

In Viśiṣṭādvaita, *Brahman* is identified with God. The *self* in the person is neither independent of nor identical with God. It is a manifestation and transformation of God. The *self* is the subject as well as the object of knowing. Consciousness, however, is not the same as the *self*. In fact, Rāmānuja accords consciousness the status of a substance (*dravya*), distinct from matter as well as the *self*. Consciousness is like the light, which manifests other objects like pot, but cannot otherwise become visible. Consciousness makes awareness possible in the person. The *self* is that which has knowledge and awareness, but it is incapable of revealing anything else except itself. Consciousness is constrained in the *self* because of the

latter's association with the mind–body complex. The *self* operates through the mind and the mind is connected with the senses. In perception, for example, consciousness starts with the *self* and passes via the mind and the appropriate senses to the objects of perception and takes their form, which is revealed in turn to the *self*. Even though, this notion of perception is somewhat similar to Advaita notion of *sākṣin* (witness consciousness), in Rāmānuja's theory of *dharma-bhūta-jñāna* there is no place for *sākṣin*.

The *self* is intrinsically blissful, but suffers pain because of its past karma. The goal of the *self* is freedom from pain and enjoyment of absolute bliss by liberating itself from the existential defects and imperfection. This can be achieved by *bhakti* (celestial love), which includes devotion not only to God but also to one's duty, and by *jñāna yoga*, which is pursuit of knowledge and truth.

The "self" means two different things in Viśiṣṭādvaita and Advaita. In the former it is more like an empirical self in that it enjoys agentic functions as in the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* system, whereas in Advaita it is essentially transcendental or noumenal. In Advaita, there is only one Self while Viśiṣṭādvaita subscribes to the notion of plurality of *selves.* In Śaṅkara's theory, Consciousness and the Self are identical. According to Rāmānuja, however, they are distinct. Viśiṣṭādvaita appears to be concerned with more mundane and objective aspects, whereas in Advaita consciousness is discussed in its sublime and unsullied subjectivity. In Advaita, Consciousness is undifferentiated subjectivity in contrast to the objectively determined and sensorially processed phenomenal experience. In Viśiṣṭādvaita, unlike in Advaita, consciousness does not constitute the *self*; rather it is an attribute of the mind. In this, Rāmānuja's position is closer to Nyāya conception of consciousness than of Śaṅkara. In Rāmānuja, the individual *self* is real because what changes is not the *self*, but consciousness, and consciousness is not the essence of *self* but an attribute of the mind. In a significant sense Rāmānuja simplifies the cognitive process and the concept of consciousness by avoiding the notion of *sākṣin* and by separating the *self* from consciousness as-such. However, in the process, some of the intrinsic subtleties implied in the complex manifestation of consciousness appear to be lost.

In sum, both Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja subscribe to the notion that *Brahman* is the Supreme Self (*Ātman*). In Śaṅkara, *Ātman* (Supreme Self) and the individual *self* (*ātman*) are the same. The latter is the *Ātman*, limited by the mind–body complex of the person. In Rāmānuja, however, individual *ātman* is more than a simple reflection of *Ātman*. Further, Rāmānuja considers consciousness an attribute of the mind and identical with *Brahman*/*Ātman*, unlike in Advaita.

5.6 Sāṁkhya-Yoga Conception of the Self

We discussed at some length the Sāṁkhya-Yoga concept of *puruṣa* in Chap. 3. Briefly, *puruṣa* as true *self* is consciousness as-such or pure consciousness. Mind, an evolute of *prakṛti*, which is materiality as-such, is the material substratum of all

experience. *Puruṣa* makes mind's awareness possible; *prakṛti* is what the awareness is about. In their transcendental abstractions, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are independent and self-subsisting principles of reality in its fundamental duality. In the existential human context, however, there is an entanglement of the two in the form of an interface. A consequence of this interface is the emergence of the person. The person is thus embodied consciousness. As consciousness, the person is the center of awareness and the agent of action and experiences. That awareness, however, is not a true reflection of consciousness as-such, because it is constrained in various ways by the embodiment. The goal of human endeavor is to have a true reflection of consciousness, which is in the final analysis, no other than self-realization, the realization of the *puruṣa* in one's being.

That *jīva* (person) is not *puruṣa* may be seen from the fact, that, according Sāṁkhya-Yoga, *sattva*, *rajas,* and *tamas* are the underlying constituents of matter and not of consciousness. Therefore, the classification of persons on the basis of their temperament characterized by the dominance of one of the elements, *sattva*, *rajas* or *tamas*, is a classification not based on consciousness but of the mind. Therefore, the person is not the same as *puruṣa* and not a manifestation of it either. Interpreted this way the *Sāṁkhya-Yoga* and *Advaita* appear to hold similar views, which are substantially different from the Buddhist denial and *Nyāya* assertion of *ātman* as the self. *Puruṣa* is very much like the *ātman* in Advaita, except the distinction between *Ātman* and *ātman* is nonexistent in Sāṁkhya-Yoga, where there are multiple selves and not a single Supreme Self. While Advaita makes a helpful distinction between *ātman* and *jīva*, a similar distinction between *puruṣa* and *jīva* is missing in Sāṁkhya-Yoga. While consciousness as-such is conceived as one in both the systems, in Sāṁkhya-Yoga, it is located in multiple independent centers. Therefore, there are many *puruṣas* and not a single Brahman. In asserting the existence of enduring *puruṣas* Sāṁkhya-Yoga differs from Buddhism and by attributing consciousness as the essence of *puruṣa*, it differs from Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika which attributes consciousness to mind and not to *ātman*.

Puruṣa is often used to convey two different things. This is a source of some confusion. It is sometimes used to convey the sense of *jīva*, the empirical *self.* Other times it is used to convey the sense of *ātman*, the sentient principle. Rao (2011a) has shown how an equation of *jīva* with *puruṣa* is misleading and untenable. *Puruṣa*, as *jīva*, is embodied consciousness. Consciousness embodied is not consciousness as-such, which *puruṣa* is believed to be. *Jīva*, therefore, can only be the mask of the *puruṣa* formed by latter's imprint in the mind. What undergoes change and has cognitions, experiences feelings, expresses emotions, and acts is the mind. It cannot be consciousness as-such. *Puruṣa* itself is pretty much outside of the mind. Its role is no more than an ever-present source casting its reflections on the mind. *Puruṣa* does not interact with the mind or the body. However, it does influence the mind and through it the body by its reflections cast in the mind. The reflections phenomonalize the mind by bestowing subjectivity on its contents. Inasmuch as subjectivity is the essential ingredient in one's experience emanating from the *puruṣa*'s reflections on the mind, the experience is mistaken to be that of *puruṣa*, when it in fact belongs to the mind, more precisely to its ego aspect.

The empirical self, the ego ever-present in the phenomenal transactions of the mind, is not the true *self*, the *puruṣa*.

Personal identity at the phenomenal level belongs to the ego driven empirical self. It arises as a necessary consequence of the manifestation of subjectivity in the mind by the reflections of *puruṣa* on it. In order to have phenomenal experience, there needs to be an agency to experience. That agency cannot be the *puruṣa*, which by its very nature does not experience or act. However, the experiences and actions are wrongly attributed to it by mistaking the empirical self, the ego, as the real self, *puruṣa*. In fact, a person's goal of attaining *kaivalya* in Yoga is no other than overcoming such misidentification and to realize consciousness as-such and achieve identity with the true *self*.

5.7 Jaina Conception of the Self

While Buddhists accord impermanence and change to reality and Advaita thinkers consider permanence and immutability as the hallmark and the defining characteristic of reality, Jainism embraces both change and permanence as aspects that inhere in reality. As mentioned, the self in Buddhism is no more than a causally connected bundle of fleeting and flowing mental states. Jaina thinkers argue that such is an unsustainable position, even granting that the changing states are indeed real. For there should be an enduring factor binding the momentary states into a coherent continuum. That factor, according to Jainism, is the *self*. It is, however, called *jīva*. *Jīva* in Jainism is different from the *jīva* understood as the person.

Now, what are the Jaina reasons for postulating the existence of the *self*, different from the material body? First, the very thought of doubting the existence of self is evidence for its existence. Doubt presumes consciousness and consciousness cannot be attributed to the material body. Therefore, a conscious *self* must be presumed to exist. Second, the realization of one's continuity across time as implied in statements like "I did it yesterday," "I do it now," and "I will do it tomorrow" points to the existence of an enduring self. Third, Jaina thinkers argue that there can be no thoughts, feelings, or volitions in the person without the self to which they belong. The central argument is that life manifests qualities that simply do not belong to matter alone. Awareness, for example, is something that is in principle alien to matter. Thoughts have no physical form. Therefore, they cannot be sustained by a physical substance.

What is the nature of the *self* in Jainism? The *self* is a nonmaterial substance, which is of the nature of consciousness. The *self* is not inert, however. It is an active, knowing and feeling agent. The Jaina thinkers consider *self* from two different perspectives. First, self-as-such is unsullied by karma and unhindered by the physical body. Second, in the existential condition the inherent omniscience and illumination of the *self* are obscured by karma. Self as-such is infinite in four ways (*ananta catuṣṭaya*). It is infinite in knowledge. It has infinite intuitive capabilities.

The unsullied *self* enjoys infinite bliss and can exercise infinite power. The empirical selves burdened by karma deposits manifest no such infinities.

The empirical self has the following characteristics. (1) It is essentially conscious. In contrast to *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, it is not conceived as an attribute of the mind. Rather consciousness is intrinsic to it. (2) Unlike the *puruṣa* in Sāṁkhya-Yoga, the self is an agent that undergoes change and experiences joy and happiness. (3) Self in the person pervades the entire body and is limited by the body. The self is considered coextensive with the body. (4) Unlike in Advaita, there is a different self in each animate body. Finally, (5) the self has no form and is noncorporeal even when it is embodied and embellished by karma. The self is revealed directly in introspection. Thus the empirical selves are many. Each embellished in its own way by karma contained in its body. The self is both conscious and changing and at the same time it is also the agent and the enjoyer of actions.

What is interesting and somewhat unique to Jainism is that the "self" is regarded both as permanent and enduring and at the same time changing. Even though the self is essentially noncorporeal without a form of its own, it also manifests form and physical characteristics in association with the body it occupies. Thus, *jīva* in Jainism may be seen as having both corporeal and noncorporeal aspects; self is the principle of sentience as well as the agent of action. Viewed from a transcendental perspective it is noncorporel consciousness as-such. From an empirical perspective, the self is an agent of action and the enjoyer/sufferer of those actions. To indicate this dual aspect conception of the "self" in Jainism, we may use "*self*" in quotes to refer to Jaina conception of the "*self.*" Advaita and Sāṁkhya thinkers would not approve such a conception. However, Jainism has its own metaphysics and ontology to sustain its arguments.

In Jaina metaphysics, there are substances, which are real. But what is real is not a changeless and immutable entity. Rather the substance is conceived to be dynamic and of evolutionary nature. It undergoes constant change and is perpetually modified. Evolution does not imply the emergence of something new and different from the original. Evolution is essentially unfolding that which is inherent and enfolded in the substance to begin with. The "*self*" (*jīva*) is a substance; but a substance is not a static unchanging entity. It is something that undergoes constant change unfolding itself and manifesting a variety of conscious phenomena. Thus, we find in the "*self*" continuity and permanence as well as change and modifications. The "*self*" as a substance is a conscious entity because consciousness is its essence. However, consciousness manifests in multiple forms as thoughts, feelings, and volitions.

In Jainism consciousness as-such cannot be dissociated from its manifestations. Consciousness as-such and a conscious event, like a cognition, are not different. The "*self*" is the seat of knowledge. It is pure consciousness. At the same time, the "*self*" is the knower, that which knows, and has the knowledge. In the act of knowing, the "*self*" is modified as knowledge. Inasmuch as the self extends itself in the body in which it is localized, it works through the body and thus there is a reciprocal influence between the two. The brain events influence conscious states. At the same time conscious states also influence bodily states. There is thus a

relationship between states of consciousness and brain activity that appear to provide a way of understanding the interaction between conscious mind and the nonconscious body (Jain 2005).

To sum up the discussion on the nature of self/person, at the metaphysical level there are indeed, as one would expect, profound differences between different systems of Indian thought. The main difference between them is that the *self* in the abstract (*ātman* or *puruṣa*) is either consciousness as-such (Advaita, Sāṁkhya-Yoga and Jaina) or consciousness is an attribute of the *self* that requires mind to manifest it (Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Viśiṣṭādvaita). Buddhism, of course, denies the very existence of a metaphysical self. At the psychological level, the level of empirical self, however, there is surprisingly a general consensus that the empirical self of the person is the mask of and not the true self. Therefore, the true self needs to be uncovered by its realization in thought and practices as suggested by those who assert the existence of the self. In Buddhism which denies the very existence of the self, the very exposé of the mask as nonexistent is sufficient to overcome suffering. We may also note that Indian thought reflects more the axiological concerns of the thinkers than their psychological concerns. There appears to be an abiding unity and an enticing commonality among Indian thinkers in that the discussion of the self is to help human kind to swim the sea of suffering in which they are believed to be situated.

In Buddhism as well as in the main strands of Hindu thought, lack of correct knowledge, ignorance (*avidyā*) is the root cause of suffering. Ignorance is the lack of true understanding of the nature of the self and reality. From the Buddhist perspective it is the misconception of the self/person as a permanent and enduring entity, which causes craving, clinging, desires, and attachment, which in turn perpetuate the cycle of *saṁsāra* with its attendant suffering. In order to break the cycle, Buddha recommends that we realize that there is no enduring self to which one can cling. All that exist are the fleeting thoughts, passing feelings, and changing events. When such a realization of the nonpermanence of being and emptiness of the self is achieved, one is led on the path of *nirvāṇa* to partake in a state of being free from pain and suffering. The sense of permanence engendered by the belief in an enduring self, it is believed, is the cause of clinging and craving. Therefore, the realization of the emptiness of the self is the suggested remedy to the suffering humanity.

In the context of Buddhist refutation of the notion of substantial self, it is not difficult to see that the focus of the Buddha is on the empirical self, seen as the binding ego and not so much the metaphysical self the Buddhist thinkers preferred to reject. In actuality, the Buddha had little interest in finding ultimate answers to vexatious metaphysical issues relating to God and soul. Gautama Buddha, as quoted in *Majjhima-Nikāya*, says: "it is not the time to discuss about fire for those who are actually caught in the burning fire, but it is time to escape from it." The Buddha's concerns are existential and his solutions empirical. Consequently, what the Buddha was rejecting is not the metaphysical *self* (*ātman*) but the psychological self (*jīva*) with the primary functions of the ego. It is the ego, which harbors desires

and is the instrument of craving and clinging and consequently the cause of suffering. So what Buddhism aims at in its discourse on the self is a deconstruction of the ego through its own analysis of the self.

The situation does not appear very different in the case of Hindu thinkers. The major difference between Hindu and Buddhist thinkers consists in the focus of the former on the metaphysical *self* (*ātman*) as against the Buddha's concern with the ego-centered empirical self. Hindu thinkers were obsessed with finding the permanent and unchanging, whereas the Buddha confined himself to explaining the change that seems to characterize existence.

The self at the psychological level appears quite similar for both Buddhists and Hindu thinkers. It is unreal and not the authentic self. What Buddhists have rejected is in actuality the psychological self, the ego that binds us to things. In Hindu thought, the ego is not the *self*. The person is no more than a mask of the *puruṣa*, a masquerading act performed by the mind. Clinging, craving, desires, attachment, and so on do not belong to the *self* but to the ego function of the mind. The Hindu thinkers share with their Buddhist counterparts that alleviation and removal of human suffering consists essentially in the realization that the ego or the I-ness is not an enduring *self*. The *jīva* is changing and not permanent; it is the misconstrual that it is permanent and the true *self*, which causes the existential anguish and suffering.

As mentioned before, deconstruction of the ego is the recommended path for liberation from the existential human bondage and ubiquitous suffering. The Buddhists as well as Hindu thinkers agree that meditation and achieving states of *samādhi* are helpful means for the deconstruction of the ego. Whereas the Buddha appears to be content with such a deconstruction, Hindu thinkers find it necessary to find a place for the *self* in the overall architecture of the universe. If this approach is typical of Indian thought, with all the above differences notwithstanding, it stands in utter contrast with the concerns of psychologies in the West that strive to preserve the ego intact as the center of the person. The Western concerns are with the empirical self, the person, with little concern with the *self* (*ātman*) or the Supreme Self (*Ātman*). From a psychological perspective this approach is understandable. However, the nonrecognition of the role of *ātman*, consciousness as-such, in one's being severely limits the scope of psychology with the consequence that the very basic nature of consciousness and its subjectivity are lost and a variety of significant phenomena fall outside the boundaries of psychological research.

From the above discussion of the various versions of the "self" in different systems of Indian thought, we may draw the following unified conception. In its most abstract form the "self" may be conceived as the Supreme Self (*Ātman*) that bonds all beings together and conveys unity in all that is. It is the one without the other, nondual, self-manifesting consciousness as-such. The second intermediary level of the "self" (*ātman*) is the unity and the selfsameness that underlies the various forms and manifestations that characterize the person in her existential context. The third and the concrete level of the "self" is the empirical self, the *jīva*, which is ever-changing, playing different roles and appearing in many shades and colors. If *Ātman* is the spiritual/transcendental *self*, the *jīva* is the phenomenal/empirical self. If consciousness is the essence of the transcendental

self, the ego is the center of the phenomenal self. While the former is self-subsisting, the latter is not. The phenomenal self is a product of the mind influenced by the *ātman*. It is the marriage, as it were, of the *puruṣa* (*ātman*) and the *prakṛti* (mind) that consummates in the birth of the *jīva*. Further, we may add that reflection on and analysis of the *jīva* (the phenomenological self) lead one to the apprehension of *ātman*. Further reflection and deeper analysis reveal the *Ātman*, the Supreme Self. Thus, the transcendental Self (*Ātman*) and the *self* (*ātman*) are not mere metaphysical postulates but items of experience at different levels of one's being. Meditation and other forms of *self-realization* discussed in the Indian tradition are steps in the spiritual analysis that touches the core of one's being in the Supreme Self. This in essence is the substance of Rao's Body–Mind–Consciousness model of the person (see Rao 2011b).

5.8 Some Western Parallels of the Concept of *Jīva*

The roots of Western views of person can be traced to ancient Greece, where the word *prosopeion* designated the mask that actors wore while acting in a play. In one sense, this parallels the difference between *ātman* and the *jīva* as we described. The manifest, phenomenal self is only a mask that hides the true *self*. This etymology suggests the importance of external appearance of individuals that hide what is beneath the mask. It also implies that people act as if they are playing a role in a drama; it is as if they follow a script already written for them. In Indian thought, Bharata, in his *Nāṭyaśāstra* (i.e., the science of drama) used a somewhat similar dramaturgical model to help understand human nature. Bharata, as we will discuss in the following chapter, used the context of actors playing various roles in the performance of a drama as a convenient backdrop for understanding the nature of human emotions. Despite this commonality of using drama as aid in understanding human nature, however, there is an important difference between the Western and Indian uses of the analogy of the theater. While the Greeks emphasized the external appearances, Bharata focused on the inner experience rather than the public face that people often present in daily life to hide their privately experienced feelings.

There is an interesting story in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (8.7) that conveys the idea of the importance of the inner versus outer aspects of persons. Indra, the chief of gods, and Virocana, a demon, go to the king Prajāpati to learn the concept of self, which is supposed to be the most crucial in understanding personhood. Prajāpati asked them to look for it right in the eye to help understand the meanings of self and personhood. Both Indra and Virocana misunderstood this suggestion to mean that whatever seen by the eye is of greatest essence in persons. So they looked at their own mirror images in a pan of water, and assumed that their well dressed and ornamented bodies to be their real selves. So Virocana goes back to his clan and professes a doctrine that suggests serving the observable bodily self as the right way to attain highest happiness. Indra, however, begins to doubt the correctness of such a view, thinking that the body will get old as time passes; it might go blind or lame

and thus bring unhappiness. So he goes back to Prajāpati seeking clarification. After many years of study and contemplation, Indra realizes that what Prajāpati asked to recognize as the most essential aspect of personhood is not what is seen by the eye, but rather the seer behind the eyes, a witness that continues to be present without dwindling, and might prove to be a source of undiminishing happiness. This view of personhood clearly requires turning inward to the center of experiencing, rather than looking out and making observations about what meets the eye. Such a perspective favors a contemplative approach to happiness and truth—an approach that dominates psychology in the Indian tradition in contrast to the outward looking stance favoring observation of objects in the world that dominates in the West.

There is, however, one aspect of the view of personhood that is common to both Indian and Western traditions, which emphasizes persons as morally responsible beings. In the history of Western civilizations, when the dominance of Greece ended giving way to the ascendancy of the early Roman Empire (about two centuries before and after the beginning of the Common Era), the focus shifted to persons as citizens subject to the law of the land. Such an emphasis is consistent with Roman Law, which is an important contribution of Rome to world civilization. During the second century of the Common Era, an authority of Roman Law called Gaius used the term *persona* to designate a human being with rights and responsibilities as distinguished from things and animals that are not bestowed with rights or burdened with duties. The focus in this regard was on the individual human being; only the *same* person who did something wrong deserved punishment, not anyone *else*. This view of individual persons to be held responsible for their actions was different from the Greek concept of justice, where it was all right to punish an entire clan for the wrong doings of an individual member. The idea of the individual as a person responsible for his or her actions was shared by Jesus, who lived in the shadow of the Roman Empire. According to the Christian worldview, each person is held responsible for all of his or her actions, good as well as bad; he or she will be called by name to be appropriately rewarded or punished on the Day of Judgment. Moreover, from a Christian viewpoint, what is important in regard to moral responsibility is the *intention* behind an action even more than the action itself. Even the *thought* of stealing or fornicating makes the individual culpable, whether or not the thought is translated into action. It should be clear that, unlike the concept of persona that derives its connotation from the idea of *prosopeion* meaning a mask, in a legalistic view the focus shifts to the intention behind action, thus moving away from the external appearances to what is beneath the mask so to speak. What is important about persons is what they *think* and *intend*, more than what they *say*, or how they *look*. The idea of *individual* responsibility was common in the West to both religious as well as secular spheres.

An *individualistic* view of personhood flourished within a secular sphere during the European era of Enlightenment roughly corresponding to the eighteenth century of the Common Era. The focus in such a view is on the individual herself; it is the same person who did something good or bad deserves a reward or punishment appropriate for her action. Such a view still dominates the social and political spheres in the West. Indeed, it is the corner stone of a civic society, especially in

democratic societies where each individual has rights and duties. Modern psychology has generally ignored this important aspect of persons. Such neglect mainly centers around mechanistic models and the view of science as a value-free enterprise that flourished under the influence of behaviorism. When a human being is thought of as a sophisticated machine, she is a *thing* like a computer, and not a person endowed with rights and duties. We may ignore such mechanistic views for the time being and focus on implications for psychology following from the conception of humans as morally responsible beings.

In the Western tradition, the view of a person as an individual responsible for the consequences of his or her actions was best articulated by the British thinker John Locke in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690/1959). Writing as a political philosopher laying down the conceptual foundations for democratic societies of the modern era, Locke considers person to be a *forensic* concept, i.e., a concept appropriate for courts of law. In other words, persons are responsible members of a civic society to be held accountable for their actions in a court of law. Interestingly, the focus on accountability extends beyond the individual. Thus, even corporations are considered to be persons insofar as they may also be held responsible for upholding their contractual obligations with persons or other corporations, and be punished for a breach of a contract. What interests here, of course, is not corporations but individual persons; and Locke elaborates his conceptualization in this regard.

In Locke's view, the first and most important condition of personhood is *consciousness*, or the functioning mind, which in turn has to have the following three capacities: (1) intelligence, or cognitive capacity to understand what are appropriate actions in given situations; (2) a capacity to feel pleasure and pain, without which reward or punishment will be meaningless, and (3) agency, implying ability to act in accordance with a freely chosen course of action. A careful consideration of these conditions of personhood can show that they are the logical prerequisites for individuals to be held accountable for their actions. Take, for instance, the first condition of consciousness. Obviously, a patient in coma who has lost consciousness cannot be aware of the responsibility to pay the hospital bills; it is only after he or she regains consciousness that this issue could be brought into the picture. Being conscious is the absolute minimum condition for holding someone responsible. Thus, we may not hold even a most intelligent robot responsible for causing injury to a human being and punishing in some way or other, for we cannot ascribe any robot either consciousness of the capacity to feel pain or pleasure. Now let us consider "intelligence," or the capacity to think, as a condition to hold someone responsible for her or his actions. Surely it is unreasonable to expect an intellectually challenged person to obey the laws that are beyond his abilities to comprehend. This idea extends to temporary cognitive deficits as well; a person who cannot think properly under the influence of drugs, or a traveler who does not understand the local language, could hardly be held responsible for lack of understanding what they were supposed to do something as explained in a billboard. A similar consideration applies to capacity to feel pain and pleasure as a condition mentioned by Locke. There is no point in "punishing" a robot that hit and

killed a factory worker standing nearby, for it would not feel pain even if it is dismembered. By contrast, people may presume rats and pigeons as being capable of experiencing pain; even behaviorists, who do not believe in attributing human attributes to nonhumans and reject all references to subjective experience use food and electric shocks to shape the behavior of rats and pigeons. Now consider agency, or capacity to act in accordance with a freely chosen course of action, the third condition for personhood as articulated by Locke. There is no point in saying that a person, whose hands were tied by burglars, ought to have helped a lady in danger during the burglary. As the famous expression by the philosopher Kant goes, "ought" implies "can:" we can say someone ought to have done such and such only under conditions that he or she could have done so.

It should be now easy to see that Locke's view of personhood clearly echoes the Upaniṣadic view of *jīva*. As noted above, the Upaniṣads consider the *jīva* as one who is conscious (*cetā*), and is a knower (*jnātā*), feeler (*bhoktā*), and agent (*kartā*). It is hard to find the rationale underlying this conception explicitly explained in the Upaniṣads. However, the idea of *jīva* as the enjoyer and sufferer of the good and bad consequences of own actions is quite explicit in the Upaniṣads, and is implicitly adopted by most schools of Indian thought through ages. The rationale explained above in light of Locke's account of the concept of person can be safely expected to apply to the Upaniṣadic concept of *jīva*.

There is another important point that Locke makes that needs to be mentioned here. He points out that, before handing out a punishment in a court of law, it is necessary to ensure that the person accused of a crime is *one* and the *same* as the person the witnesses claim to have caught red handed while committing the alleged crime. The condition of being *one* and the *same* thing across time and space is called *identity*. The same principle is involved when we are asked to produce a certificate of *identity* such as a "photo id," while cashing a check or a passport while entering a country. In the common instance of borrowing a book, it makes sense to confirm that the would-be borrower is the same person that the card ascertains as having paid her dues, and hence eligible to exercise the *privileges* offered by the library to its readers. Similarly the passport ascertains that its owner is among those persons who have been granted the *right* to travel in and out of all countries except those that might be specified in the passport as out of bounds. Thus, identity is a precondition in matters of rights, privileges, or culpability—issues concerned with *justice* in a civic society. While Locke, as a political philosopher, spoke about personhood and identity in the context of civic societies, the Upaniṣads conceived of *jīva* as individuals subject to the inexorable laws of ethics ostensibly applicable to justice on a cosmic scale.

The idea that the universe is a just world is implicit in the Law of Karma. The Law of Karma has been an inalienable feature of almost all schools of Indian thought for millennia. A focus on the individual was an essential feature of this Law; consequences of one person's karma could never be assigned to anyone else. The continued sameness or identity of persons is a necessary part of the idea of personhood grounded in concerns for justice, and this rationale is as applicable to Indian thought as it is to Western thought. What Locke articulated in the

seventeenth century England, the same concern was explicit in the Vedāntic arguments for the continued sameness of the *ātman* in their debates with the Buddhists who persistently argued that there could be no such thing as a permanent self in a world of perpetual change.

The significance for psychology of this conceptualization should now be obvious. It provides the fundamental rationale for the basic subject matter of psychology studying consciousness, mind and body and the trilogy of cognition, affect or emotion, and volition or willed action. In his historical analysis of the background of modern psychology Hilgard (1980) has shown how cognition, emotion and volition, or the "trilogy of the mind" as he puts it, became the core subject matter of psychology during the nineteenth century. A similar trilogical focus is an integral part of the Indian approach to psychology. Thus, *jñāna*-, *bhakti*-, and *karma*-yoga, the three main forms of "applied psychology" in the Indian tradition involve the systematic modification of the three basic capacities of the *jīva*, namely thinking, emotion, and action. Interestingly, all the three main forms of yoga just mentioned aim at complete transformation of the person's consciousness leading to higher states, while Patañjali's yoga, often called the *dhyāna* yoga aims at doing the same by controlling the stream of thought processes.

Although modern Western psychology began in the nineteenth century with cognition, emotion and volition as its central topics, by the middle of the twentieth century these topics got either diluted and transformed, or ignored under the influence of behaviorism. Thus, cognition was generally diluted to perception, robbing much of the complex and subjective aspects, and this led to a "cognitive" revolution in the second half of the twentieth century to try correct this deficit. Emotion was studied mainly as a matter of bodily activation to be studied objectively without focus on the subjective experience of emotion. Moreover, the deterministic perspective of behaviorists such as Skinner not simply ignored but even denied human agency (Skinner 1971). Consciousness, which is the most basic feature of personhood, was ruled out as subject matter of psychology, thereby focusing on a purely mechanistic view of human beings. By contrast, psychological thought in India through millennia has focused *jīva* as a knower, feeler and agent, thereby implying an emphasis on the essentially moral nature of human beings. Further, psychology in India has always viewed consciousness as the key feature of humans, and has developed multiple ways of leading individuals from ordinary to extra-ordinary states.

There is another crucial difference between Indian and Western perspectives. Even when consciousness is admitted as a legitimate concept of study by psychologists, it is commonly equated with the mind. The conflation of mind and consciousness in Western psychology is a source of serious differences between Indian psychology and psychology as developed in the West. Even when a distinction is made between mind and consciousness, the later is considered a specific feature of the mind and no more.

Implicit in the Indian tradition is the Body–Mind–Consciousness model. It is in virtue of the fact that consciousness finds expression in mind influenced in part by the bodily functions that the person knows, experiences, and acts. In virtue of the

reflections of consciousness in the mind, the person has cognitions. She experiences pain and pleasure and other emotions because of the involvement of bodily processes. Similarly, the person makes use of her somatic apparatus in her actions.

Now, the crucial difference is that in the Indian conception of the person there is behind the unstable and changing mask, there is a genuine self (*ātman*). It is in virtue of *ātman* that the person has identity and continuity. The one who has needs, acts, and enjoys/suffers is *jīva*. However, what bestows consciousness and provides continuity amidst constant change is *ātman*. In the Western tradition, phenomenal self is the only self that there is. There is no reference to spiritual or transcendental *self* in psychological discourse. From the Indian perspective, underlying the phenomenal self there is the spiritual *self* (*ātman*). The person's goal is to realize that the true *self* is *ātman*. Such a realization brings about a total transformation of the person. When such a transformation takes place, there would be no pleasure and pain, just bliss; no truth and falsity in cognitive activity, just consciousness of reality; no desires and longings, just tranquil being.

Finally, the conception of "self" in Indian thought has some important implications for applications in Indian psychology. The Western conception of the self led to such applications as in-depth psychology in general and psychoanalysis in particular to understand the dysfunctional self and help to rebuild it for its healthy functioning. The hidden part of the self in this case consists of the inaccessible layers of the unconscious which one could reach by analysis and reflection. From the perspective of Indian psychology, the hidden part of the *self* is more than the repressed wishes and animal urges. The significant aspect of the hidden *self* is the *ātman*. What one needs to recover through analysis and reflection is the identity of the *ātman* beyond the manifest *jīva*. This requires *self*-analysis, which is more than psychoanalysis. It is psycho-spiritual analysis. It is the search for the true *self* (*ātmānveṣaṇam*) via the analysis of the manifest self (*jīvasamīkṣā*). In Indian psychology the study of "self" is not merely to fix the dysfunctional self but to elevate the person to higher and more fruitful levels of functioning. If psychoanalysis is typical of the Western approach, *self*-analysis is its counterpart in Indian psychology.

5.9 *Svabhāva, Prakṛti*, and Personality

As we move from person to personality, we move from *jīva* to the manifest characteristics of *jīva.* For most people, for most of the time, it is fairly easy to recognize a person they know on the basis of her distinctive characteristics such as looks, voice, style of speech, and other consistent patterns of behavior. Similarly, it is the persistent patterns of behavior that enable us to quite reliably guess, or predict, a person's behavior under certain conditions. In Indian thought, the distinctive characteristics of persons are usually designated by two commonly used terms, *svabhāva* and *prakṛti*, which roughly correspond to what is referred to as personality in modern psychology.

The term *svabhāva* literally means someone's natural condition or state of being. In general, the term *svabhāva* means natural form or condition of anything, or more particularly a person's nature, character, constitution, temper, or disposition. There is a popular expression in Sanskrit called *svabhāvo duratikramaḥ*, which means that one's natural constitution is not easy to overcome or change. Similar views are expressed in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, saying it is nature that prevails (*svabhāvastu pravartate*, 5.14) and that "beings follow their nature, so how could resolutions to the contrary succeed?" (*prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni*, *nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati*, 3.33). The commonly cited examples in the traditional literature are simple. Thus, for instance, fire by its very nature is hot, while water by its nature is not. Similarly, while one person may be stingy by nature, another person may be generous in his dealings. It implies that persons have distinctive characteristics that persist over long periods of time. This popular assumption, as well as the widely used terms *svabhāva* and *prakṛti*, have been used in systematic conceptual analysis in Indian systems of psychology as well as medicine. In both psychology and in medicine a systematic typology is developed, which we shall examine in some detail.

From the very use of *prakṛti* to refer to *svabhāva*, it is obvious that it belongs to the material aspects of *jīva* and not to *ātman*. It is the empirical self that wills, acts and enjoys. It is the *jīva* that has *svabhāva*. *Svabhāva* is a manifestation that is brought about by the mind–body complex of the person and not by the true *self* (*ātman*).

It may be noted that the term *prakṛti* used above to mean temperament or disposition is a technical term with a different meaning in the Sāṁkhya system we discussed previously. According to the Sāṁkhya view, the warp and the woof of the universe is constituted by the three components of *prakṛti*, namely the *sattva*, *rajas and tamas*. It is not necessary to repeat here in detail what these three components mean; it is enough to note that the Sāṁkhya view of *prakṛti* and its three components is widely popular and extends to the conceptualization of *svabhāva* or personality characteristics. The *Bhagavad Gītā*, for instance, presents an elaborate personality typology based on the three *guṇas* of *prakṛti.* Before we begin an account of this typology it is important to remember a few things about this trilogical conceptualization. *First*, all the three *guṇa*s are presumed to exist in everything at all the times; there is no either/or situation in regard to these three components. The implication of this idea is that we may not expect pure types, as individuals do not neatly fit into one category of the other. *Second*, a certain level of predominance of one or the other *guṇa* may persist in a given thing or person, so that distinctive characteristics indicative of that *guṇa* are most commonly—but not necessarily always—manifest in that person. *Third*, despite the persistent predominance of one or the other *guṇa*, the relative balance among the three is not fixed forever. The balance gets repeatedly disturbed and restored under various conditions such as seasonal variations in the environment, or food consumed, for instance. As we will see later, a similar way of conceptualization is followed in developing a trilogical typology of constitution in Āyurveda. The typology is therefore flexible, allowing for mixed types with changes possible in individuals in various ways. In other words, one's personality is not cast in stone.

Though relatively stable, it is not totally inflexible. Such conceptualization of personality typology reminds of the distinction made in contemporary psychological terminology. *Guṇa*, as a personality type, may be conceived both as a "trait" that persists over long periods of time, as well as a "state" which is manifest temporarily under certain conditions but not usually.

5.10 Three Types of Personality in the Bhagavad Gītā

The personality typology according to the three guṇas is extensively described in the last two chapters of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. In Chap. 17 it describes the differences in the three types in terms of the food they eat, the sacrifices they offer, penance they perform, and gifts they give. Thus the *sāttvik* persons (those in whom the *sattva* component dominates) prefer sweet and nourishing food that promotes health, vitality and joy; make sacrifices of the prescribed variety with a sense of duty and without expectation for reward; perform penance with a balanced mind; give gifts to worthy persons without expectation of return. By comparison, the *rājasik* persons prefer bitter, sour, hot and harsh foods that cause pain and disease; make sacrifices with the expectation of reward; perform penance to gain respect; and give gifts with the expectation of return. In contrast, the *tāmasik* persons prefer stale, putrid, unclean and tasteless foods; make sacrifices without regard to rules of proper conduct; perform penance through self-torture and injury to others; and give gifts to unworthy persons or with contempt toward others.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* continues a similar three-way comparison of *guṇa*-based personality types in the 18th chapter. Here the *sāttvik* type of persons are said to pursue the knowledge of the single unchanging principle underlying the infinite variety of continually changing entities in the world; persistently engage in performing their duties without attachment to results of their actions; work with resolution and zeal regardless of success or failure; usually understand what is prescribed and what is proscribed, what is to be feared or not to be feared of; manifest unwavering steadiness, concentration and control over one's actions; and enjoy the kind of happiness that initially feels like poison but like nectar in the end —the kind that is attained by realization of the true nature of the self.

The *rājasik* type of persons, on the other hand, try to understand the reasons for differences among the varied entities in the world; work with great effort to satisfy desires and bolster the sense of ego; eagerly seek fruits of one's action; are driven by greed, and moved by joy and sorrow; tend to be mistaken about what is right and wrong, what is prescribed and what is prohibited; remain steadfast while prompted by desire or duty; enjoy sensual pleasures that feel like nectar at the outset but turn out to be poisons in the end.

Finally, the *tāmasik* type people are thought of as tending to carry on without trying to understand the reality behind appearances or causes leading to changes. They undertake to do things without regard to adequacy of one's capacities or consequences, loss or injury. Further, they tend to work in an obstinate, indolent,

despondent and procrastinating manner; often consider the right thing as wrong and tend to follow perverted ways of understanding. *Tāmasik* persons remain stubborn in clinging to unwholesome habits such as laziness, fear, grief, depression and arrogance. Finally, they tend to be addicted to the pleasure of sleep, sloth and negligence, which delude the soul from the beginning to end.

5.11 Constitution (*Prakṛti*) and Personality According to Āyurveda

Caraka, who systematized traditional medical knowledge in his *Saṁhitā* (CE 78) built an elaborate conceptual system suitable for the enterprise of promoting well-being and the removal of disease. The idea of *prakṛti* composed of the three continually interacting *guṇa*s as the fundamental principle underlying the universe is taken for granted by Caraka as it is by thinkers of many other systems of Indian thought. However, the term *prakṛti* acquires a different connotation in Āyurveda meaning natural, inherent, or innate condition—or constitution—as opposed to a deviant, disturbed, or "perverted" state (*vikṛti*). Even as *prakṛti* as understood in Sāṁkhya begins in its primordial state (*mūlaprakṛti*) with the three *guṇas* in a state of perfect balance, and then sets off a course of evolution from disturbance in their mutual balance, in Āyurveda *prakṛti* is understood as the original, natural state of balance of interacting principles. As in many other systems, such as that of Plato in ancient Greece, a state of inner balance or harmony is assumed to be a matter of health, and disturbance of the balance is believed to indicate pathology. While in Sāṁkhya the three *guṇas* are thought to be the basic interactive constituents of everything in the universe, Āyurveda conceives of three basic interactive constituents of everybody called the *vāta*, *pitta*, and *kapha*. These three constituents are viewed not as hypothetical entities, but as real substances with power to produce, sustain, and nourish the body, even as the three guṇas of *prakṛti* are said to produce, preserve and dissolve everything in the world. Just as a relative predominance of the three *guṇas* accounts for the natural and persistent characteristics of everything, *vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha* account for the inborn constitution of everybody.

Unlike in Western thought where mind and body are often conceived as separate and independent substances, in Indian thought the mental and the physical aspects of humans are viewed as belonging to a continuum. Thus, descriptions of the constitution of the body according to the *vāta*, *pitta*, *kapha* model involve accounts of physical characteristics of the body as well as a person's temperament—distinctive characteristics of the individual's experience and behavior. *Vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha* are often collectively referred to as *doṣa*s, which literally mean defects. Their characterization as defects is somewhat misleading since they account for the body's health when in balance inasmuch as their imbalance accounts for a wide variety of diseases. As active ingredients that account for the structure and function of the body, the *doṣa*s are subject to variation, waxing and waning in systematic

relation to the age of the individual, time of the day and night, seasons of the year, climate, type of food consumed, as well as behavior and style of life. An implication of such variation is that, while the persistent predominance of particular *doṣa* or *doṣa*s accounts for the predominant patterns of an individual's appearance, experience and behavior—or "traits" of personality—the periodic variations account for the "state" of the individual at a given time.

The external manifestation of the three *doṣa*s is characterized by specific discernible qualities. The descriptions of the three *doṣa*s may be given in the following words borrowed from Jolly (1994): "*Vāta* is dry, cold, light, delicate, moving, clear and raw; *pitta* is greasy, hot, sharp, fluid and acid; and *kapha* is heavy, cold, mild, oily, sweet, stable and phlegmatic" (p. 49). While these general characterizations help a doctor trained in Āyurveda in diagnosis of a patient as well as in identifying medicinal properties of herbs and foodstuff, they may also be seen reflected in physical descriptions of persons assigned to the constitutional categories of *vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha*. The descriptions of the three types given below must be understood as prototypical, or suggestive of individuals in whom one of the three *doṣa*s predominates. Individuals who fit these categories may not be commonly found; a majority of persons would be of mixed types insofar as each *doṣa* must be present in each body albeit in differing proportions at different types. The following account of the three types is based on the Ghanekar's (1997) Hindi translation of *Suśruta-saṁhitā* by Suśruta, one of the three most important authors of classical texts of Āyurveda.

Individuals with *vāta prakṛti* tend to have slim and dry bodies often marked by cracks in the skin on the hands and feet; dislike cold; are not very good looking; tend to walk often and walk a lot; are generally fickle in thinking and patterns of behavior; they are talkative; find difficult to make close and lasting friendships; lacking in courage; music loving, and are often uncouth.

By comparison, persons with *pitta prakṛti* have sweaty, yellowish bodies that are not very stout; tend to have red spots on their nails, eyes, tongues, lips and palms; get their hair gray and/or lose them; tend to eat a lot; dislike hot; quick to anger and also to calm down; medium in bodily strength and span of life; intelligent with a quick grasp; bright; argumentative; courageous in conflict situations; not easily browbeaten; firm with those who accept defeat, but wishing to offer them consolation.

In contrast, those with *kapha prakṛti* tend to have good looking and well-formed bodies with lots of dark hair and moist skin; like sweet foods; are courageous and strong; grateful to benefactors; not greedy; respectful of their teachers and other respectable people; tend to hold on to wealth and friends; generous; thoughtful; steadfast and with firm opinions.

A contemporary physician trained in Āyurveda (a *vaidya* or *vaid*) may use a variety of ways of observations regarding the physical characteristics of the patient combined with interpretation of complaints reported by the patient to place the patient in terms of the relative dominance or disturbance of *vāta*, *pitta* or *kapha*. Texts describing a specialized technique of diagnosis based on feeling the pulse with fingers placed on the patient's wrist explain how the patient's type can be

inferred by various nuances felt by the three fingers of the physician. Shilpa and Murthy (2011b) have developed a self-report questionnaire that can help decide whether a person predominantly belongs to the category of *vāta*, *pitta*, or *kapha*. Such a modern device may provide a handy supplement to the traditional diagnostic repertoire of Āyurveda. Such a paper-and-pencil instrument requires validation via corroboration of its results with that of expert *vaidya*s. The proper validation of such diagnostic instruments, and the assessment of their practical utility, remains a task for future research. We shall return to this issue later on in this chapter.

5.12 A Buddhist Perspective on Personality Types

In the *Abhidhamma* portion of the trilogy of sacred books of Buddhism called the *Tripiṭaka*, there is a part called the *Pudgala-Paññatti* (Law 1922), which deals extensively with personality typology. The Pali word *puggala* means an individual or a person, and *paññatti* means designation. It is rather ironic that the authoritative texts of early Buddhism called the Theravāda Buddhism would devote a considerable portion to describe *puggala*—something that they insist is not real. In his introduction to the translation of this text, Law (1922, p. vii) explains that the concept of *puggala* presents only an apparent truth (*sammuti sacca*), rather than a "real" truth (*paramattha sacca*). The organization of this text is rather unusual in that the types are organized into ten groups of types such that the first group involves a list of 50 *single* descriptors, the second group includes 26 *pairs* of descriptors, the third involves 17 *triplets*, the fourth presents 29 *quartets* and so on. Taken together these groups of types provide a wide array indeed. It is neither possible nor necessary to describe the entire range of types described in this text. To help get a sense of this approach to personality typology, a small sample of descriptors may be pointed out here.

The first group includes, for example, the following types of single adjectives to describe certain types of persons: an average man, a member of the elect (*arhant*), one like the Perfectly Enlightened One (who, like the Buddha, has attained the knowledge necessary for Nirvāṇa). Typical pairs of descriptors from the second group are the following pairs of descriptors: the hypocrite and the charlatan; the forgetful and the mindful; the scrupulous and the conscientious; the depraved and the refined. An illustrative triplet of descriptors from the third group is: a foul-mouthed person; a "flower seeker;" and a "honey-tongued" person. Such expressions would hardly be self-explanatory, so the text elaborates each such descriptive term in short paragraphs. Some descriptions are based on interesting metaphors. One of the typological triplets, for instance, is described as a mark on a stone, a mark on earth, and as mark on water. What is implied here is that some persons are irascible, and once angered for whatever reason, they tend not to forget the experience for a long time; a mark is left on their minds for a long time like a groove in a solid rock. By comparison, a second type of persons may get angry, and remember the incidence for some time, but not too long. In contrast, a third type

does not get angry easily; the effect of an insult, for example, may neither be deep nor lasting—like the impact of a stick struck on water. An interesting example of a quartet of types in the fourth group is: a wicked man, a wicked man of the worse type; a good man; and a good man of better type. This last example may be compared with a five-point Likert scale—minus the neutral point in the middle.

It is easy to see that this Buddhist typology is far more complex than the typologies described in the *Gītā* and *Āyurveda*, both of which proposed only three main types. At any rate, it would be useful to take a look at all these traditional typologies in the context of contemporary psychology.

5.13 Overview of Personality Typologies from the Indian Tradition

As can be easily seen, personality typologies are developed in the Indian tradition in varied contexts. The *guṇa* typology, for instance follows as part of the Sāṁkhya conceptualization of the world in terms of three constituents or components of the universe. Persons are different, it is understood, just as everything else in the world is; some people may be more active than passive due to predominance of *rajas* over *tamas*, even as wind is naturally active while a rock passive due to the relative predominance in them of *rajas* over *tamas* and *tamas* over *rajas* respectively. The differences among persons as conceived by this typology are relevant primarily, if not exclusively, in the context of spiritual development, which was a matter of great concern to psychological thinkers within the Indian tradition even as psychopathology was an important concern for a modern psychologist like Eysenck who focused on neuroticism and psychoticism as crucial dimensions of personality. Buddhism, like the Sāṁkhya system, is fundamentally spiritual to the core, and as such its typology is also prompted primarily by spiritual considerations.

Given the preference for a value-free and secular stance that dominates contemporary psychology, the Indian typologies might appear to be overly value-laden and religiously inclined when seen from the vantage point of modern psychology. Modern psychology, like modern sciences in general, would prefer to be descriptive rather than prescriptive; focus on what people *are* like rather than what one thinks they *ought* to be like.

In this context it may be noted that description and prescription do not make a perfect dichotomy; what is considered a fact might be liked or disliked, valued positively or negatively under different conditions. For instance, introversion and extroversion could be seen as purely descriptive categories based on a person's relative preference for being with other people or alone. Yet, if a personality test of introversion or extroversion is used in the context of selecting persons for a sales position, extroversion might be valued more positively than introversion. Although many of the contemporary views of personality typology and dimensions of individual differences, such as Eysenk's or Cattell's, might appear to be descriptive

rather than prescriptive, their use in applied settings such as mental health or vocational psychology, specific characteristics of personality may be valued more or less depending on their relevance to the context.

While the Sāṁkhya and Buddhist typologies appear very different from their contemporary counterparts due to their spiritual and religious relevance, the Āyurvedic conceptualization shares with modern psychology a concern for health. Āyurveda is a living tradition, and vast numbers of people today in India and also many in other countries are diagnosed and treated on the basis of their constitution judged in terms of the *vāta*, *kapha* and *pitta* typology. A medical practitioner trained in Āyurveda may use the prototypes as described in classical texts such as those cited above in the tasks of diagnosis or prescription of an appropriate therapy. In daily practice, however, an Āyurvedic practitioner would use specific indices of the three *doṣa*s by means of specialized techniques of examination based on direct observation and the interpretation of the patient's clinical history. One of the specialized diagnostic techniques used in Āyurvedic medicine involves distinguishing between subtle nuances of the pulse identified by three fingers placed on the wrist of the patient. Given the rich theoretical analysis and sophisticated practical techniques for diagnosing a person's constitution according to the *vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha* typology, it is possible to further enrich Āyurveda's diagnostic repertoire by developing a self-report questionnaire based on contemporary psychometric techniques. As can be expected, the content of psychometric instruments based on Āyurvedic typology is bound to be vastly different from contemporary instruments based on highly diverse ways of conceptualization that are grounded in world views that have very little in common.

5.14 Psychometric Studies of *Guṇa* and *Doṣa* Typologies

An interesting combination of traditional Indian concepts and modern psychometric techniques can be found in various instruments recently developed to measure personality characteristics based on the concept of the three *guṇas* in *Gīta* and Sāṁkhya system and the three *doṣas* in Āyurveda. Prominent in this respect are the publications by several researchers such as Uma et al. (1971), Mohan and Sandhu (1986), Sitamma et al. (1995), Wolf (1998), Shilpa and Murthy (2012). In a review of this work published by Murthy and Kiran Kumar (2007), the authors mention as many as fifteen research papers based on empirical work. Many of these papers present questionnaires designed to assess *guṇa* typology. Since a list of all such papers as well as a critical analysis of the conceptual issues in this research have already been presented by Murthy and Kiran Kumar, it is not necessary to repeat such a review here. However, the more recent work by Shilpa and Venkatesha Murthy deserves critical attention here since it indicates a step ahead in the same line of research, and presents an opportunity for a quick look into the place of such empirical work in the continuing development of Indian psychology.

In one of their series of articles, Shilpa and Murthy (2011a, b, 2012) present an analysis of the view of personality dynamics found in traditional Indian thought, the concepts of the three *guṇa*s and the three *doṣa*s indicating how they are founded on the notion of the concept of the five basic "elements" (*pañca mahā-bhūta*s) that are believed to constitute physical entities including human bodies. Based on such conceptual foundations, they present two separate psychometric measures: the Mysore Triguṇa Scale (Shilpa and Murthy 2012) to assess the psycho-spiritual component, and the Mysore Tridosha Scale to assess the psycho-physical component. There are several positive aspects of this work, which deserve special mention. *First*, the authors correctly recognize that the trilogical systems of conceptualization in Sāṁkhya and Āyurveda are not separate, but founded on a common integrated world view. Indeed, as is often recognized, even the concept of *rasa* in Āyurveda is systemically connected with that of *rasa* in the aesthetics in dramatics and Sanskrit literature theory. *Second*, they rightly recognize that neither the *guṇa*s nor the *doṣa*s are thought of as compartmentalized categories; they are viewed instead as mutually overlapping and dynamically interacting components. An implication of this mutual relationship among the three components of both trilogies is the recognition of a number of mixed categories based on the relative predominance of the three components. Shilpa and Murthy recognize sixteen different mixed categories mentioned in the classical literature in Āyurveda. The recognition of a larger number of types provides a finer grid for classification when compared with a rough-and-ready division into a small number of categories of unlimited variations of pattern across large populations of individuals. It may be noted that Shilpa and Murthy's conceptualization of the sixteen categories is clearly based on sound theoretical considerations clearly following their list in classical sources. Such theoretical derivation of categories stands in contrast with the 16 Personality Factors in Cattell's (1957) system, which are empirically derived on the basis of degrees of correlation through the technique of factor analysis. As to how many factors should be recognized depends on a relatively arbitrary values of correlation, rather than a sound theoretical basis.

Aside from the theoretical considerations just mentioned, the work of Shilpa and Murthy shows some positive aspects on empirical and methodological aspects of research also. *First*, they have used fairly a large sample—numbering over 1500—in developing these scales. From a statistical point of view, this broader base offers a better foundation than the development of some rival scales based on rickety sample sizes. *Second*, they recognize that the highly negative characterization of individuals in whom the *tamas guṇa* dominates is bound to introduce some distortion in measurement. For, after all, in a self-report questionnaire, who would agree to having been a sloth, of preferring stale foods, or being habitually prone to make donations to undeserved causes? Shilpa and Murthy claim that they have taken care to help offset the possible distortion arising from the "social desirability" factor, which is all to their credit. As to how far they are successful in offsetting such possible distortion is another issue, which we need not discuss here. *Third*, they claim fairly high reliability of both their scales based on measures of internal consistency across scale items, which is also a positive point in their favor. *Finally*,

there is the issue of validity, which needs careful consideration since a scale is only as good as the degree to which it truly measures what it intends to measure.

Like most personality typologies in psychology, *guṇa* and *doṣa* are *constructs*, which are intrinsically more difficult to measure when compared with physical entities like length and mass. The issue of *construct validity* is a complex one with a long history going back to the pioneering work of Cronbach and Meehl (1955). A basic source for establishing construct validity is the content in literature which explains the construct, or concept, within a theoretical framework. Shilpa and Murthy rightly turn to the appropriate literature—*Gītā* and Sāṁkhya for the *guṇa* concept, and Caraka and Suśruta for the *doṣa* concept. They derive sentences, or test items used in constructing the test from the classical accounts—which is of course appropriate. They then consult recognized experts in the respective fields to ensure that the items correctly convey the gist of the concepts. The high degree of consensus among selected experts about the correct representation of the concepts through the items provides for *content validity* of the tests. From here they go on to test the *concurrent validity* of their *guṇa* test by correlating the scores of a sample of subjects with the scores on another, previously published *guṇa* test. A high correlation indicates that the two tests tend to measure the same thing. As can be easily seen, such validation implies the notion of truth by consensus, which is rather slippery. To put it bluntly, it courts the danger of both, or all, of the two or more tests being equally wrong—a case of a blind man leading other blind men! One way of overcoming the circularity of such mutual affirmation is to find an independent external criterion based on more dependable objective criteria. While it is difficult to find such an independent criterion to test the validity of the *guṇa* test, an independent external criterion presents itself in the case of the construct of the *doṣa*s. As psycho-physical entities, the *doṣa*s are defined in terms of the bodily features through which each *doṣa* manifests itself—the lean or fat body, color of the skin, nature of the pulse beating, and so on. Indeed, Āyurvedic physicians (*vaidya*s) are trained to assess the constitution of their patients' categorization mainly, if not exclusively, in terms of the clearly observable physical features. It would be useful to first establish if two or more expert *vaidya*s indicate mutual agreement in their assessment of the *vāta*, *pitta*, *kapha* status of a sample of number of patients, and then tally their assessments with the paper-and-pencil measure of the three *doṣa*s. It is not clear if such an attempt was made by Shilpa and Murthy in their research.

All constructs descriptive of personality derive their meaning and significance from their place within a network of concepts and propositions that together constitute a theory. As Quine (1953/1964) forcefully pointed out, what is most important is to test the truth value of a theory as a whole, rather than that of a proposition or hypothesis, since what lends meaning to propositions and constructs is the theory as a whole. Wholism of this sort applies equally to psychometric tests as well. Important in this context is Donald Campbell's (1959) idea that, to test the validity of a construct or its measurement is to first figure out (or "predict") on the basis of the theoretical framework, as to what measures should converge or diverge from each other. Then one may proceed with an attempt at "convergent and discriminant validation" through appropriately positive and negative correlations

among tests. Such testing should be eminently possible in the case of well-defined constructs within rich and internally consistent theoretical frameworks—as is the case with the concepts of the *guṇa*s and the *doṣa*s. Attempts at such validation is a challenge for the future progress in the empirical testing of theories in Indian Psychology.

Systematic empirical testing and methodical validation of theories is an enterprise arising from a hopefully fruitful and mutually enriching "hybridization" of traditional Indian and modern Western perspectives. Given the predominantly *practical* bent of Indian psychology, empirical validation is relatively less important than the role of concepts and theories and research findings in spiritual development of the individual, which is the overarching goal pursued by psychology in the Indian tradition. Success in empirical validation would provide additional credence to Indian approaches within a world view broadened and inspired by a wholesome historical East–West encounter. The overview of empirical studies of neuropsychological studies of consciousness and clinical effectiveness of meditation presented in this book take us in that direction. Examining this issue in light of the ontological and epistemic foundations of traditional Indian and modern Western psychologies, a couple of observations are worth making.

First, as pointed out earlier in the first chapter of this book, research following Cronbach and Meehl's methodology of construction validation was expected to lead to a "nomological network," a network of "law-like" statements supported by empirical evidence that would, when taken together, provide an accurate picture of the "real" world. Whether or not this expectation is truly promising is a complex issue that cannot be discussed within the scope of this book. However, it is important to note that such methodology is fundamentally grounded in the ontological and epistemological presumptions of logical positivism. These presumptions include the idea that all that exists is matter in motion, and that observation is the only guide for validation of statements. It should be clear that most schools of Indian thought, while accepting the utility of observation (*pratyakṣa*) in the search for knowledge, do not consider it as the *only* source of knowledge as did the logical positivists. Although a physicalist ontology similar to that of logical positivism is recognized with some respect as in the case of the followers of the materialist Cārvaka, it has not been very popular. More specifically, the dominant schools of Indian thought, particularly the Vedānta and Sāṁkhya, view consciousness as an irreducible principle of reality. To the extent that psychometric or any other methodology is founded on physicalism and an exclusive reliance on observation, it will have little traction in the mainstream of Indian psychology.

However, one relevant question is what is the use of psychometric instruments based on concepts of individual differences in personality such as those described and discussed above? As far as the tests based on Āyurvedic concepts of constitution, the answer is clear. As indicated above, it would add a handy instrument to the tool-box provided by traditional diagnostic techniques of Āyurveda. But what about the typology based on the Buddhist thought? In this regard Collins (1982, p. 161) points out that the various types of individual differences described in *Puggala Paññatti* and similar other sources of Theravāda Buddhism have been

significant in the practical matter of religious training. (*Dīgha Nikāya*, 1.176; *Saṁyutta Nikāya*, 2.21; *Sutta Nipāta*, 102).[2] The differences between persons described in such texts point out the levels of greed, hatred and delusion and their opposites, and the assessment of such qualities help decide upon the acceptability of a person to monkhood, and to determine the probationary requirements before such acceptance. Whether such practical use of traditional concepts of personality typology is still in use, and if so in what form, is a potential topic fit for investigation. How about the *guṇa* concepts? No such practical use is mentioned that we know of, but such use is conceivable. Taking the cue from contemporary psychology, tests can be used to assess levels of the three *guṇas* for instance, empirically validating the theoretical constructs, test hypotheses derived from traditional theories, etc. Hopefully, empirical testing would help enhanced understanding of the traditional lore.

[2]For early Buddhist views on the Doctrine of Karma see *Anguttara Nikāya*, III.33 in Warren, 1922, pp. 215–221; *Saṁyutta Nikāya*, III, 2.10 in Warren, 1922, pp. 226–228.

Chapter 6
Cognition, Emotion, and Volition

As explained earlier, *jīva*, which basically means the person as responsible member of society, is characterized as one who knows (*jnatā*), enjoys/suffers (*bhoktā*), and acts as an agent (*kartā*). This implies that the person must possess three basic capacities: for cognition and knowing, for experiencing emotions such as pleasure or pain, and for volition, implying the capacity to choose a course of action among possible alternatives. As noted before, the assumption that the capacities for thought, passion, and action (collectively called the "trilogy of mind")—are central to personhood is common to the history of both Indian and Western psychology. Against this background, in this chapter we present a selective overview of the way in which cognition, emotion, and volition have been conceptualized in the Indian tradition, indicating parallels—or the lack thereof—in modern psychology. We have in Chap. 4 on the mind–body complex an occasion to discuss the accounts of cognitive processes in some systems of Indian thought. Therefore, what follows in the present chapter is to supplement what is covered earlier and bring out the implications for achieving the goal of self-realization.

In Indian psychology there is greater emphasis on the *practical utility* of psychological knowledge than on pursuing knowledge for its own sake. Moreover, in the Indian tradition, practical application in an individual's own efforts toward spiritual uplift is emphasized much more, unlike in modern psychology where clinical application of psychological knowledge is more prevalent. As we shall see, the traditional Indian concepts and theories of cognition, emotion, and volition have applied aspects relevant for spiritual uplift. Thus the triology of cognition, emotion, and volition are not only the psychological process but are also ways to achieve *self-realization*, which is the goal of human quest in the Indian tradition.

6.1 Cognition

In contemporary psychology, the term cognition is a generic term for any process whereby an organism becomes aware of, or obtains knowledge of, an object or event. This includes the processes of sensation, perception, recognition, conceptualization,

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judging, reasoning, and so on (English and English 1958). As in the case of many such terms, there is no exact equivalent for cognition in Sanksrit. Monier-Williams's English–Sanskrit Dictionary gives *jñāna*, *vijñāna*, and *prajñāna* as the Sanskrit counterparts of cognition. While these terms connote shades of the complex views of knowledge, they do not emphasize the *process* aspect of the contemporary usage of the term cognition. Nevertheless, Sinha (1933/1958) devotes a whole volume full of detailed references to various aspects of cognition spread out in a vast range of classical Sanskrit literature. Sinha's references cover a wide array of connotations of the term cognition in modern psychology. They indicate how the various aspects of the processes of knowing were analyzed by scholars of the entire range of schools of Indian thought. The minutiae which the scholars deal with are particularly pertinent to the debates of rival epistemological doctrines. It is neither necessary nor possible to cover the varied nuances debated among dozens of schools and sub-schools of Indian thought. The discussion of issues in this chapter is clearly and deliberately selective with the intention of presenting some crucial aspects of traditional Indian views of cognition mainly in the Advaita and Nyāya systems with only minor references to others. We had in the previous chapter referred briefly to Sāṁkhya-Yoga and Buddhist notions of cognition.

6.1.1 Śaṅkara's Views of Cognition and Knowledge

We begin here with a model of human cognitive process presented by Śaṅkara, the chief exponent of the Advaita system, who developed a comprehensive conceptual framework including a model for cognitive functions. It is important to note here that Śaṅkara's approach is solidly grounded in the ancient Vedic tradition, and his perspective is known to have been shaped in response to significant developments in several schools of thought in the Buddhist as well as Upaniṣadic traditions of his time. The choice of Śaṅkara's views to be emphasized in this chapter is because it provides the foundation for *jñāna mārga*, or the path of knowledge for attaining *self-realization*.

In the introductory section of his commentary on Bādarāyaṇa's aphorisms Śaṅkara builds on the Vedic world view and combines many insights of the Upaniṣads to construct a model about the nature of consciousness, cognition, and knowledge. Following the idea of the Nāsadīya Sūkta that at the beginning of the universe the "One" split itself into "Many," Śaṅkara suggests how basic properties of the One, which, although basically indescribable, are approximately described as *sat-cit-ānanda,* or existence, consciousness, and bliss. It is surmised that the all-pervasive pure consciousness (*cit*) is reflected in countless individual living beings (*jīva*s). It is as if the originally undivided consciousness is now "trapped" at the center of awareness, enclosed within the boundaries of individual beings. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says: "The self-caused pierced the openings (of the senses) outward; therefore one looks outward and not within oneself" (2.1.1). The "self-caused" here implies the *self* (with a lower case) of the individual being,

who possesses only a reflection of the limitless cosmic consciousness of the Ātman/Brahman. Although the *self* is in its essence identical with the limitless Supreme Self (*paramātman*), the manifest self is normally confined to the boundaries of a body; it is just one among countless other organisms and varied objects.

The original single Self (Ātman/Brahman) is complete in itself; there is nothing outside it, and hence it does not need to look either inward or outward. But the selves it created, being ensconced within the boundaries of one's skin, must look outward at the things and organisms in their surrounding. What is accessible to its awareness is based on what comes through the senses, which have inherently limited capacities (*upādhi*) typical of the species in which it is born. All organisms, including humans, must look out at the environment, for getting food as well as for avoiding danger, so it is small wonder that looking outward is normal, and looking inward is uncommon, for most of us. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* continues after the words quoted above saying: "Some wise man, however, seeing life eternal, with eyes turned inward, saw the Self" (2.1.1). Indian psychology followed this Upaniṣadic lead to develop varied ways of looking inward to attain *vidyā*, the transcognitive form of knowledge, as distinguished from *avidyā*, or incomplete knowledge gained through the cognitive processes of observing and reasoning.

The term *avidyā* is also suggestive of erroneous understanding of the true nature of the *self*. For a clear and simple definition of *avidyā* we may turn to Patañjali (2.5) who explains it as the error of taking the self-as-subject, which means the one who experiences (*draṣṭā*), to be the same as the self-as-object, the observable aspects of one's selfhood (*dṛśya*). This means that the unchanging *self* is mistaken for the continually changing body as well as the periodically changing social selves. Patañjali (2.4–9) adds that this error brings in its wake a series of consequences: egoism (*asmitā*), a tendency to seek pleasure (*rāga*) and avoid pain (*dveṣa*), and a strong desire for the perpetuation of life (*abhiniveśa*). In his view, all these afflictions working together result in an excess of misery over happiness. To help escape this negative outcome, Patañjali suggests turning our attention inward (*pratyāhāra*), as opposed to the common tendency to constantly look outward. This solution clearly reflects the spirit of the ancient *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* mentioned above; indeed, Patañjali's Yoga provides a step-by-step process for withdrawing attention inward to ultimately focus on the *self* at the center of awareness.

While Patañjali offered this definition of *avidyā* centuries earlier than Śaṅkara, credit goes to Śaṅkara for explaining the implications of *avidyā* for the processes of cognition and for human knowing at large. Notwithstanding the doctrinal differences between the Advaita and Sāṁkhya-Yoga systems, the Advaitist Śaṅkara develops a view of *avidyā* fairly consistent with Patañjali's views just mentioned. In the introductory section of his commentary on Bādarāyaṇa's Vedānta aphorisms he presents his views of *avidyā* and explains the implications that follow from it. Since his conceptual framework involves a perspective on the nature of cognitive processes in general, and the way the processes shape the search for knowledge at large, these are particularly relevant for psychology. Here we present an outline of Śaṅkara's views basically following the late Ramachandra Rao's (2002) short book on Śaṅkara's *Adhyāsa Bhāṣya*.

Śaṅkara portrays the Self and the non-Self in terms of properties that stand in sharp contrast with each other. While the Self (*Ātman*), he suggests, is conscious, changeless subject, devoid of parts, and also devoid of pleasure and pain, the non-Self (*anātman*) is non-conscious, continually changing object, and composed of parts. For Śaṅkara the two are as different from each other as light and darkness. Regardless of such radical differences between the two, he says, there is a common tendency among people to erroneously superimpose characteristics of one onto the other. Thus, the body itself is not conscious, but we erroneously presume that it is. And although we all know that the body and our social roles are impermanent, we tend to carry on as if these would persist forever. On the other hand, while the Self, being of the nature of pure consciousness, is neither fat nor lean, tall or short, we attribute such properties of the body to the Self, saying I am tall or slim and so on. Also, in spite of the fact that the Self is a witness to ups and down in life and capable of retaining equanimity, we say "I am happy" or "I am miserable" now and then. Śaṅkara observes that such misattribution of properties, however irrational, is common among all kinds of people, young and old, unlettered and erudite; indeed our normal transactions in life are founded on this erroneous presumption. Śaṅkara calls this basic error *avidyā*. As can be easily seen, this view is essentially the same as that of Patañjali mentioned above, except that Śaṅkara, unlike Patañjali, develops its implications for the processes of knowing. He points out how *avidyā,* as the primary and primeval error of misattribution of properties of the self-as-subject to the self-as-object and vice versa, affects the process of validating knowledge claims (*pramāṇa-prameya vyavahārāḥ*) in all sciences, positive as well as normative. All cognitive processes imply the working of an embodied knower who must depend on her senses, and these processes must be grounded (*adhiṣṭhāna*) in a functioning ego. Thus the ego of the knower enters into all acts of knowing which results into various unavoidable distortions and shortcomings. In effect, as Ramachandra Rao (2002) points out, Śaṅkara essentially "rejects the *absolute* validity of *all* means of knowing" (p. 131; emphasis added).

This conclusion may appear to be quite radical and sweeping. To help understand it better it would be useful to explain a few concepts that Śaṅkara's followers have added over the centuries to present a more detailed account of the nature of cognitive functions. First, it is understood that cognition is an integral feature of a person who is simultaneously a knower (*jñātā*), enjoyer/sufferer (*bhoktā*), and an agent (*kartā*) all at the same time. Cognitive processes cannot take place in a vacuum; they cannot be totally isolated from emotions and actions. The goals which inquirers set for themselves, the values that justify their undertakings, the emotions that accompany the search, whether hope, despair, or resignation, as well as their cognitive ability and background, all are bound to affect the search for knowledge for better or for worse. Śaṅkara reminds us that humans, including the learned ones, are open to be influenced by rewards and punishments. In other words, there are several contextual factors that can derail unencumbered search for knowledge. To put it in other terms, how we know by means of cognitive processes of observation and reasoning is *contingent* on a host of contextual and background factors, and consequently never *absolutely* correct or final.

Turning now to some developments coming from Śaṅkara's followers in the Advaita tradition, we may first note a distinction between two kinds of misattribution made by Miśra (1980, p. 25) at the outset of *Bhāmatī*, his exposition of Śaṅkara's commentary on Bādarāyaṇa's Vedānta aphorisms. As Sarasvati (1981) explains in his commentary on *Bhāmatī* that there are two types of *avidyā,* or misattribution, called *mūla avidyā* and *tula avidyā*. *Mūla avidyā* refers to the primordial source of misattribution, which began with the apparent "splitting" of the One Self into Many selves at the beginning of the universe. This source of error is universal, endemic, and common to all humans whether unlettered or learned; it can be dispelled only through Self-realization. The other, *tula avidyā* involves "preceding series of beginning less false impressions" (Dasgupta 1922/1975, Vol. 2, p. 109) that is specific to individuals depending on their history after birth as well as prior to conception. To interpret this in contemporary terms, *tula avidyā* would include the entire background of preunderstanding with which an inquirer begins her search for knowledge at every step of the way. This would include the capacities and limitations ingrained in the individual through her genetic background, as well as whatever she many have learned, for better or for worse, from her cultural legacy through the entire period of socialization and training.

How do such background factors affect cognitive processes? According to *Dṛg-dṛśya Viveka* (n.d./1931), a well-known text composed by an unknown author of the Advaita tradition, there are two factors that interfere with the process of cognition: the *first one* is called veiling (*āvaraṇa*) and the *second*, projection (*vikṣepa*). At the *mūla* or primordial level of *avidyā*, veiling involves the concealing of the distinction between the self-as-subject (*dṛk*) and self-as-object (*dṛśya*) on the inside, and between ultimate reality (*Brahman*) and the phenomenal world (*sarga*) from the outside. This is not easy to interpret in current terminology since the very idea of ultimate reality is alien to contemporary ways of thinking. One way of putting this is to say that the contentless pure consciousness is hidden behind the cloud of the contents in the stream of thoughts, but such an expression may not add much clarity because the idea of consciousness without content is not common in contemporary psychology. At the *tula* level of *avidyā*, veiling involves restrictions on the understanding of new information placed by whatever the individual has learned and remembered thus far. The other common handicap in cognitive processes is projection (*vikṣepa*). It involves the addition of some parts of ideas acquired earlier that are not there in the newly encountered object or concept.

Let us now see what the above-mentioned view means in light of contemporary psychology. Several closely parallel ideas from contemporary psychology may be pointed out. Let us start with the concept of *vikṣepa,* which was translated as projection, and correctly so. At the outset readers may think of projection in Freudian sense because, as noted before, Śaṅkara makes a reference to emotions (implied in the reference to the knower as also being an enjoyer/sufferer) suggesting them as a source of errors or shortcomings in the process of knowing. However, his emphasis seems to be more on the cognitive than emotional aspects insofar as he explicitly refers to role of memory in projection. The point is that, while perceiving a novel object, we tend to view it not exactly as what is given in experience due to

tendency to *add* to the object elements from past experience—elements that are *not* in the object itself. Such additions are not always or necessarily wrong and useless; they can often be beneficial. For instance, when we recognize an object as belonging to a class, such as a mango of say the Alfanso variety, then we can safely rely on our memories of eating such a fruit in the past, and then we know what to exactly expect from it and do with it. If we cannot thus project from past memories onto a freshly encountered object, life would be difficult; it would take too much effort for us to judge the nature of an object solely on the basis of what is given in experience at a given moment in time. However, not all objects in a class are exactly alike, so in relating to particular objects errors easily creep in. If someone introduces to me a newcomer as a degree holder from an Indian Institute of Technology, I might just *assume* that he is a smart engineer working in the field of information technology since that is an image of people in this category from my past experience. But I may be completely wrong in this particular case; this person may either be an economist trained in an IIT, or not too smart anyway. Students are familiar with the issue involved here from the accounts of how stereotypes work; erroneous attributions, positive or negative, creep in when we project ideas based on past experience in judging newly encountered objects. According to Śaṅkara's model, errors of such kind are endemic in our common ways of knowing.

Śaṅkara also suggests the role of the ego that is equally endemic, and often compromises the accuracy of what we know. To help understand this point in light of modern psychology reference may be made to a seminal essay by Greenwald (1980) in which he conceptualizes the ego as an organization of knowledge that tends to be "conservative," in that it tries to stick on to what is known in the past and tends to reject or ignore new ideas that do not fit existing ways of understanding. He marshals a wide range of experimental evidence to show how commonly such tendencies operate in human behavior. Greenwald goes on to compare the organization of knowledge at the level of the individual egos to knowledge organization shared by scientists working in various fields of science. In this context he refers to Kuhn's (1970) observation that through long periods of history scientists have tended routinely to ignore anomalies, that is, observations that do not fit the current models. The reason to place such insights of modern psychology in the context of a discussion of Śaṅkara's views of human ways of knowing is to point out how his views are in some respects convergent with contemporary understanding of ways of knowing at both the individual level as well as in all fields of science.

We may now turn to certain developments in Śaṅkara's model of cognitive functioning in the work of some of his followers, and try to interpret them in light of parallel views in contemporary psychology. The concept of the *tula avidyā*, for instance, is closely parallel to the notion of preunderstanding in hermeneutics (Palmer 1969), and the Piaget's (1970) concept of cognitive schemata available at a given moment in the process of cognition. From the point of view of hermeneutics, which is the science dealing with the role of interpretation in the acquisition of knowledge, the adage is "there is no understanding without pre-understanding." In other words, how we know anything is contingent upon the ways of understanding

we may have developed thus far. A parallel notion in Piaget's developmental view of cognition is that our ways of knowing are constantly evolving throughout life, and cognitive structures or "schemata" that may have been acquired thus far in the course of one's cognitive development are the only resource available to make sense of all that is novel in experience. The existing schemata are the source of both the strength and weakness in how we know.

In Piaget's model, the concept of *assimilation* conveys the limits placed on the acquisition of new knowledge: We are able to absorb only what fits within the range of the cognitive schemata acquired up to the present moment of knowing. These schemata work like filters, as it were, absorbing what fits and leaving out what does not. According to Piaget, the limits of the process of assimilation can be overcome through *accommodation*, that is, by making appropriate *changes* in existing schemata. The Advaita system presents views of cognitive processes that closely parallel those of hermeneutics and Piagetian views just presented. From an Advaitic viewpoint, *tula avidyā* implies whatever knowledge we possess at any stage, and no matter how far we advance, the limitations arising from existing knowledge will never disappear. Indeed, Piaget's view is not much different; he believes that the twin processes of assimilation and accommodation are never ending, which means that our knowledge is perpetually open for revision. Toward the end of his book *Structuralism*, Piaget (1968/1970) refers to Gödels' theorem which suggests that axiomatic systems necessarily remain incomplete, and further adds that cognitive systems, whether in the form of an individual's understanding or scientific knowledge, would always remain incomplete. Such an understanding of science is of course common; science is an open-ended enterprise always ready for revision, hopefully heading for increasingly closer approximation to a perfect account of reality. Śaṅkara, while working within a different model, and relying on different sources, nevertheless reaches similar conclusions. In his system there is a concept called *upādhi* to indicate the natural limitations of the human cognitive apparatus that keep rational/empirical knowledge perpetually imperfect and in need of revision.

From Śaṅkara's point of view, knowledge within the domain of *avidyā*, which includes *all* sciences dealing with phenomenal reality, is valid to the extent that it is consensually supported and helps solving practical problems. However, to the extent it is revisable, it is not perfectly descriptive of reality. It is in this sense that in the Advaita system the phenomenal world is thought to be neither totally real nor totally unreal (*sad-asad-vilakṣaṇa*). According to Śaṅkara's Advaita system, propositions are considered valid (*pramā*) insofar as they measure up to the criteria (*pramāṇa*) used by the inquirer, and retain their status as valid as long as they remain unfalsified (*abādhita*). Claims to validity of a truth claim must be given up as soon as either convincingly contrary arguments or clearly conflicting data appear on the scene. In contrast, *vidyā*, or knowledge founded on pure consciousness, is unfalsifiable.

It may appear that *vidyā* is unfalsifiable knowledge in the sense of rational and mathematical truths such as $2 + 2 = 4$, or that the sum of internal angles of a triangle is always 180°, can never be disproved. But that is not so. *Vidyā,* as a form of

knowledge revealed in the state of *nirvikalpa samādhi,* is not a mathematical or logical proposition that is absolutely true without needing an empirical or experiential proof (as Kant called them "apodictic" or absolutely correct). *Vidyā*, as conceived of in the Upaniṣads and in the Advaita, is open to *experiential* verification, meaning that its truthfulness can be directly experienced in a state of consciousness attainable through the practice of techniques specified in the literature on the Advaita system. The kind of knowledge accessed through such an experience is not open to falsification since, in that state, the subject–object distinction is eradicated. Pure consciousness experienced in such a state is not directed at any object, nor is there a "knower" equipped with some cognitive schemata ready to assimilate fresh information. The mind is emptied of cognitive and sensory content, and the subject is temporarily isolated (*kaivalya*) from the phenomenal world. There is no one there, so to speak, to either verify or falsify any proposition, which accounts for the unfalsifiable character of *vidyā*. In this context, *vidyā* may be viewed as being beyond the domain of science, and indeed, Śaṅkara clearly says so. It may be noted here that what is just said is not an abstract epistemological doctrine based on some quaint arguments. Here it is the psychology of consciousness that provides the foundation for a thesis about the nature of knowledge.

6.1.2 From Perception to Cognition

Dharmarājādvarīndra (1972, p. 32), in his well-known textbook on the Advaita system called the *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* mentions two kinds of perception, indeterminate (*nirvikalpa pratyakṣa*) and determinate (*savikalpa pratyakṣa*). While the former is devoid of specification of the category the object of perception belongs to, its name, or its relations to other objects, the latter involves such aspects of understanding. This distinction has been quite common in Indian thought, and is subject to much debate among several schools of thought, such as Nyāya, Mīmāṁsā, Vedānta, and Buddhism (see Datta 1932/1972, Chap. V). In one of the texts of the Nyāya system, indeterminate perception is described as being typical of infants or persons hard of hearing (Vishweshwar 1963, pp. 46–47). It is implied that newborn babies who have yet to learn a language may perceive an object such as a cat without understanding *what* it is, whether it is a cat or a dog or a toy. However, as they grow up they can distinguish cats from dogs or other classes of objects and are gradually able to characterize objects in terms of their specific characteristics as well as categories to which they belong. As Datta (1932/1972, p. 95) puts it, for a child an object may present with an unmeaning sensation, an uninterrupted experience, and an unanalyzed fact. Normal adults, however, would most commonly perceive objects in a "determinate" way, placing them meaningfully in some or the other category with appropriate names denoting them. We need not enter into the discussion of the various issues involved in the debates among different schools of thought in regard to the distinction between indeterminate and determinate

perception. What is important here is to understand the way in which the development of determinate perception takes place from the Advaita viewpoint.

In the Advaita system, as noted in Chap. 4, the mind (*manas*) is defined as that which brings together (*saṁkalpa*) and differentiates among them (*vikalpa*). According to the Advaita, the transformation of perception that occurs during the course of perceptual development in children involves its enrichment through imagining, inventing, comparing, combining, differentiating, and other such mental activities. Since it is safe to assume that the experience in prelingual stage of the development of the child is sensory experience, cognition, or ways of knowing, developed through the systematic additions of various mental functions listed above.

6.1.3 Advaita View of Cognition in Terms of Contemporary Concepts

As can be easily seen, the above perspective of cognition is fairly close to that of Piaget. The concept of indeterminate perception (*nirvikalpa pratyakṣa*) parallels what Piaget characterizes as the child's experiences during the sensorimotor stage. According to Piaget, this stage involves roughly the first year-and-half of life. During this stage the child's way of knowing and understanding the world depends on seeing, touching, and manipulating objects. The transition from *nirvikalpa* to *savikalpa pratyakṣa* described in the Advaita literature is similar to the changes that Piaget describes as taking place during the child's transition from the sensorimotor stage to that of concrete operations such as counting with fingers, which implies putting things together as the Advaita view indicates. The Indian discussions of the transition from the *nirvikalpa* to *savikalpa pratyakṣa* emphasize the child's ability to put objects in distinct categories with labels (cats under "meow" as distinguished from dogs under "whoof-whoof" and so on). The Indian observations of the child's development of the ability for putting things in categories parallels Vygotsy's experiments of concept formation which he conducted in the early decades of the twentieth century (see Van de Veer and Valsiner 1991, pp. 262–265). Vygotsky studied the process whereby children begin to learn to put objects, such a blocks of different sizes, shapes, or color, into categories based on common properties. The traditional Indian approach did not involve doing experiments like those of Piaget, Vygotsky, and their countless followers. At any rate, the child's transition to concept formation was very much a part of the traditional Indian discourse on perception and cognition. A common example in that discourse is the typical example of the comprehension of the "potness of the pot" by the child.

As Datta (1932/1972) points out, in his commentary on the Vedānta aphorisms, Śaṅkara (1980: 2.2.17) takes issue with the Nyāya view that postulates independent existence of potness of the pot, or the manhood of a man as *real* entities existing in the world. Śaṅkara's argument is that the same man is rightly thought of as young

or old, as a man, son, brother, son-in-law, and so on. Youth, manhood, brotherhood, and so on are not separate and independent entities that objectively exist in the world. They are, rather, *concepts* dependent on the perceiver's focus on specific relationships that she or he may choose to focus upon in different contexts. The point is that how we know an object or entity depends on our *interpretation*, and not simply on the physical entity itself. A dandelion is just a plant like all others; we may call it a weed insofar as we view it as useless or ugly. The Advaita emphasis on interpretation is akin to Piaget's similar emphasis. Note, for instance how, in speaking about the meaning or significance of an experiment, Piaget (1970) insists that "The significance of an experiment does not derive from a mere perceptive recording … it cannot be dissociated from an interpretation" (p. 709).

A crucial point to note in this context is that right from the early stages in life perception no longer remains restricted to physical properties experienced through the senses, but continues to involve concepts and words added by the socialized mind. A perspective common to both Advaita and Piaget is that our knowledge of the world is a matter of *construction* with elements of *imagination* added to what is given in experience. Note, in particular, that Piaget (1954) speaks of the child's *construction of reality* in the title of one of his books. The idea that the world, or reality as we know it, is more a matter of our construal than its objective status is seriously presented by a number of thinkers (Arbib and Hesse 1986; Goodman 1978). While Piaget demonstrates this thesis through numerous explorations of the development of the ideas of space, causality, and a number of important issues, the Advaita thinkers present the same sort of thesis through various metaphors as well as detailed and sophisticated argumentation.

We need not discuss here the arguments Śaṅkara and other Advaita thinkers use in developing and defending the view that the world as we know it is a matter of cognitive construction. But some select expressions and a metaphor he uses to express this view many be noted. In his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* composed in verse Śaṅkara (1921) expresses it in the following way: A person's passage through life, he says, is through a world of his imagination (stanza #173), and that the world as it appears to us is a matter of erroneous perception (stanza #259).[1] Moreover, he describes how a person wraps himself within a world of "me" and "mine," protects that world, and finds nurturance within it—like a moth lying in a cocoon of its own making (stanza #139).[2] Such views can be seen as consistent with notions in contemporary psychology that a person's self is a matter of cognitive construction (Harter 1988), and the thesis that we live in a world that is socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann 1966).

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[1]In stanza #173 of *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* Śaṅkara's words are:
manḥkalpita eva puṁsaḥ saṁsāraḥ; and in stanza #259 his words are *bhrānti kalpita jagat*.

[2]The idea that a person feels protected in a world of one's creation compared to the self-made cocoon of a moth is a paraphrase of the following words of Śaṅkara's in staza #139 of his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi: ahamiti bandhaḥ ... puṣyati ukṣati avati viṣayaistantubhiḥ koṣakṛdvat.*

6.1.4 Applications of Cognitive Psychology in India and the West

Despite such parallel views about self and reality in contemporary psychology and sociology in the West on the one hand and in the classical Indian tradition on the other, there are significant differences in views about what we can *do* with such understanding. To help understand the differences, we may consider one approach each from the Indian and Western psychologies where both involve applications grounded basically in constructivist views of cognition. Kelly's (1955, 1969) "psychology of personal constructs", for example, uses a constructivist approach in a therapeutic technique called "fixed role therapy" which he developed. It involves examining how a person's difficulties may be arising from inappropriate construction of the patient's view of his tormentor. In a case where the patient complains about difficulties dealing with his boss, Kelly asks the patient to describe the typical situations in which he feels anxious or threatened. From an analysis of such descriptions and with the use of certain tests the clinician figures out the basic dimensions, or constructs, such as kind/cruel, aggressive/non-aggressive, fair/unfair, and so on which the patient may be habitually using to construct his views of people around him. Once the patient's foundational constructs are figured out, the clinician devises alternative imaginary accounts of typical situations that may be leading to the patient's difficulties. The patient then enacts the imaginary scenario in play-acting in the nonthreatening atmosphere of the clinic. The new scenario invokes a different understanding of the patient's tormentor. Its play-acting induces a *cognitive* re*construction* of the patient's perception of the boss as not so unkind as erroneously construed before, and this reconstruction changes the patient's understanding, as well as his behavior in real life, so as to help ameliorate his difficulties.

Let us now consider the application of cognitive psychology in the Advaita tradition. As we shall see, the technique of meditation developed in the Advaita tradition is founded on a constructivist view of cognition described above. The origin of this technique can be traced directly to the famous dialogue between the Sage Yājñavalkya with his wife Maitreyī in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.4.5). In that dialogue, as noted before, the sage advises Maitreyī that the true nature of the self, which is the most important thing in life, should be understood through a three-step process of "listening" (*śravaṇa*), reflection (*manana*), and meditative contemplation (*nididhyāsana*). Many thinkers in the Advaita tradition have elaborated and explained this three-step procedure in the attainment of Self-realization. During the eighteenth century Dharmarājādhvarīndra explained in a succinct way what is involved in these steps.[3]

The *first* step in this procedure, although labeled simply as "listening" (*śravaṇa*), is understood as the careful *study* of the Advaita literature, which involves the

[3]See Dharamarājādhvarīndra (seventeenth century/1972, pp. 212–217). A lucid exposition of the three-step process with quotations from Dharmararājādhvarīndra's work can be found in an essay called the training of the Vedāntin in Hiriyanna (1952, pp. 1–18).

Upaniṣads, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Bādarāyaṇa's Vedānta aphorisms and Śaṅkara's commentary on the same, and so on. The *second* step (called *manana*) involves reflecting on the teachings of the Advaita system through a *critical examination* of its theses against their respective antitheses (*virodha*) so that each and every doubt regarding their validity is cleared up. During the process of examination the focus is shifted from abstract and general principles to their application in concrete situations in one's own particular case. It is no longer an impersonal academic exercise, but a deeply personal quest. In this regard, one may focus in particular on whether and how the Upaniṣadic views of the nature of the Self as expressed in sentences such as "thou art That", or "I am Brahman"[4] compare with one's self-definitions such as "I am the body", "I am a student," and so on. Surely such expressions as "That" or "Brahman" are not easy to comprehend. So, aside from the abundant literature that explains what such expressions mean, the Advaita literature provides a guideline: the true Self is that which remains one and the same as distinguished from the many and continually changing images of the self. The inquirer is expected to consider each and every self-image with which one normally identifies, thereby defining one's ego-identity, and see if it is open to change. Through an intense and tireless inquiry of this nature one is said to be able to make a wise discrimination between the changing versus unchanging aspects of one's selfhood (*ātma-anātma viveka; nitya-anitya viveka*). Dharmarājādvarīndra (seventeenth century/1972, p. 212) explains that this is a "mental exercise" (*mānasī kriyā*). A sustained practice of this exercise leads to a firm conviction that the true Self transcends all the objective features of the "me." With the dawning of this important insight, one's emotional involvement of the sphere of the "mine" can get diluted and one becomes ready for the next step.

The *third* step (called *nididhyāsana*) involves "meditation" in the sense that, as Dharmarājādvarīndra (seventeenth century/1972, p. 212–213) explains, the adept is able to withdraw attention completely from external objects and objects of thought, and attain a stable state of the mind needed for the direct experience of the Self. According to Dasgupta (1922/1975, Vol. 1), this step in the search for self-knowledge "includes all the Yoga processes of concentration" (p. 490). The meditator is thus ready to gradually progress toward a higher state of consciousness which is called the *nirvikalpa samādhi* in the Advaita literature. Śaṅkara explains (in *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, stanza #241) that this state is characterized by the lack of distinction (*vikalpa*) between the knower, knowledge, and the object of knowledge. In other words, one attains *vidyā*, the higher knowledge involving the direct experience of the Self (as explained in Chap. 2 of this book). He is able to access consciousness as-such and become one with it.

It is necessary to note here that Advaita treatises are clear about the difficulties in undertaking, let alone completing, the three-step course described above. Several

[4]In his treatise called the *Pañcadaśī*, Vidyāraṇya lists and explains the following four Upaniṣadic sentences (often called the *mahā vākya*s, or literally "great sentences"): *prajñānam brahma* (Aitareya, 3.1.3); *aham brahmā'smi* (Bṛhadāraṇyaka, 1.4.10); *tat tvam asi* (Chāndogya, 6.8.7); *ayam ātmā brahma*, (Bṛhadāraṇyaka, 4.4.5).

texts specify a long list of qualifications as prerequisites for persons who wish to start such a journey. Aside from having an intensive desire for spiritual self-development, and being dispassionate about worldly gains (*ihāmutra phala virāga*), one is expected to acquire several virtues such as forbearance, and faith in a competent teacher. (See Paranjpe 1998, for a more detailed discussion.) But most importantly, an aspirant is expected to make a wise discrimination between what changes and what remains unchanged in regard to one's selfhood. As noted, a crucial part of the three-step technique outlined earlier is the process of figuring out what remains unchanged in oneself, and this process involves an arduous psycho-spiritual noetic exercise. Given the importance of this process, the Advaita approach is called the path of knowledge (*jñāna mārga*) leading to *mokṣa,* the highest goal in life described in Chap. 2 of this book. A successful journey along the path laid down by the Advaita system is said to lead a practitioner to the experience of *nirvikalpa samādhi*.

6.1.5 Cognitive Deconstruction of the Ego Through Meditation

The experience of *nirvikalpa samādhi* is claimed to take a person to an indescribably high level of bliss. Only the rare individuals who attain such heights can vouch to its lofty qualities; no one else but the person having such an experience can verify their accounts whether it be a case of humdrum experience such as a tooth ache or a highly vaunted state of *samādhi*. But the value of such attainment is not restricted to the height of pleasure such an experience offers. Śaṅkara is quite clear about the highest gain attained through the experience of the Self in *nirvikalpa samādhi*. In *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (1921; stanza #426),[5] he says that the greatest gain is that the person's ego subsides once and for all. The selflessness and compassionate behavior of a Self-realized person has two important implications: *First*, insofar as such behavior is publicly observable, it can serve as an *indirect* evidence of the positive consequences such as selfless behavior following from the subjective experience of *samādhi* which is inaccessible to external observation. *Second*, the compassionate and saintly behavior of the Self-realized persons has positive effect on society as evidenced by the life histories of many saints presumed to have attained Self-realization.

As noted, given the very nature of critical self-examination which forms the core of its technique, it should be clear that it is a form of applied psychology arising out of the cognitively constructed nature of the ego. Although terse theoretical accounts of the technique such as that in Dharmarājādhvarīndra's (1972) *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* are not sufficiently clear on this issue, in his less technical and more popular work

[5]Śaṅkara's words in *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, stanza #426, are: *ahambhāva udayābhavo bodhasya pramo' vadhiḥ*.

Śaṅkara explains how critical self-examination in the process of *manana* is primarily an assault on the meditator's ego. Thus, in *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (stanza #309) he compares the ego with a fish-bone stuck in the throat, and suggests the use of knowledge to destroy it. Metaphor apart, the endlessly repeated examination of all self-definitions aimed at making a distinction between what is permanent and what is not (*nitya-anitya-viveka*) must be good enough to convincingly demonstrate the transitory nature of all views of the self-as-object. It stands to reason that all views of the "me" (in the Jamesian sense) would be recognized as primarily cognitively and socially constructed, and thereby loosened from their foundation.

If the above analysis of the process of *manana* is correct, then it can be viewed as a method of *cognitive* de*construction* of the ego. In terms of its underlying principles of cognitive psychology, this approach may be viewed as comparable to Kelly's technique of cognitive *re*construction, but only a more radical form designed to reach down to the very foundations of a person's cognitive schema. In some important ways, the Advaitic approach is more like the "Socratic Method" developed by Aaron T. Beck as a therapeutic strategy to cure depression (Beck et al. 1985, pp. 177–178). Even as Beck's therapeutic technique requires the patient to engage in dialogue guided by logic in a manner typical of Socrates's search for wisdom, Advaita suggests an inner dialogue where a person raises doubts and suggests answers all by herself.

Now, if we could turn our attention to the various approaches within the Indian tradition, the Advaita approach may be viewed as but a different way to accomplish the same result as the Buddhist approach does. We may note that both Advaita and Buddhism try to convince a person about the transitory nature of the ego. The main difference is, of course, that, while Advaita posits a permanent principle of Ātman-Brahman, Buddhism does not. Nevertheless, both Advaita and Buddhism aim at a common goal: of ridding the individual of a selfish ego so as to engender compassionate altruistic behavior. For a person who is convinced about the transitory and cognitively and socially constructed nature of the ego, the pursuit of selfish goals loses its allure, and room for concern for others is created in the life of that person. As noted, ideals such as *niḥśreyasa*, *mokṣa,* and *nirvāṇa* cherished in the Indian culture have guided the development of various forms of applied psychology in India. In the next two sections of this chapter we shall see how similar goals have inspired methods based on two other basic psychological processes, namely emotion and volition.

6.2 Emotion

As we noted in Chap. 2, there is considerable discussion in the Indian tradition of the nature of the human condition with the general observation that there is more suffering than happiness in the life of common men and women. The concern for abetting this commonly negative aspect of human life has been an important driving force behind most systems of thought and the ways of spiritual uplift these systems

developed. Accordingly, the focus of psychology that developed by different schools of thought was on the common aspects of human suffering, and not on particular forms of distress that accompany various forms of individual pathology. Nevertheless, a comprehensive and in-depth study of emotions, including unpleasant as well as pleasant states, was undertaken by Muni[6] (1956) (usually simply referred to as Bharata) in his work on drama. His treatise called the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which literally means the science of drama, was primarily addressed to play wrights, actors, dancers, musicians, stage managers, and others involved in performing arts. Portraying various emotions of characters in drama or dance is clearly a crucial task in performance, and a clear and deep understanding of the experience and expression of emotions is the key to success in this context. Bharata's insights in this matter inspired a great many scholars and artists throughout the millennia leading to the enrichment of the field of dramaturgical studies along with the psychology of emotions and aesthetics.

The rich tradition of scholarship in this field continues to flourish till this day. In current times, numerous top-flight actors, dancers, and musicians continue to follow the guidelines offered by Bharata and his followers. As drama and dance tend to portray all aspects of human life, from the usual mundane and highly wicked to most noble and enlightened, the entire range of human emotions has become the subject of study for Bharata as well as his followers. Before we begin with an account of Bharata's views of the nature of emotions, it is necessary to note that many of the scholars who followed in his footsteps were pundits well versed in Sāṁkhya, Yoga, Vedānta, Kashmir Śaivism, and other systems of Indian philosophy and spirituality. Their interest in the broader philosophical issues and their spiritual concerns led these scholars to carefully examine the nature of emotions. Naturally, the philosophical depth of the scholars enriched their analysis of emotions. Given the overarching interest in spiritual life, insights from the study of emotions and the aesthetic experience were used in understanding and advancing spiritual quest. As we shall see in the later part of this section on emotion, some scholars involved in the pursuit of religious devotion as a path toward *mokṣa* (*bhakti mārga*) found concepts of Bharata and his followers useful in understanding the nature of spiritual development.

6.2.1 Bharata on Emotions and Aesthetic Moods

Bharata recognized eight emotions (called *bhāva*s), which he considered "major" in the sense that they are more common and durable (*sthāyi*) than other emotions which he considered relatively transitory (*vyabhicāri*) and hence minor. Another

[6]Bharat Muni, often called simply Bharata, lived sometime between 200 BCE and 200 CE.

reason for distinguishing between major and minor emotion is that the major emotions were thought to be common to humans as well as animals but not the minor ones. Bharata's list of major emotions includes (1) The erotic feeling *(rati*), (2) mirth (*hāsa*), (3) sorrow (*śoka*), (4) anger (*krodha*), (5) interest/enthusiasm (*utsāha*), (6) fear/(*bhaya*), (7) disgust (*jugupsā*), and (8) astonishment (*vismaya*).

In addition to the eight major emotions, Bharata accounts for thirty three *minor* or relatively transient (*vyabhicāri*) emotions: repose or withdrawal (*nirveda*), debility or weakness (*glāni*), doubt or apprehensiveness (*śaṅkā*), jealousy (*asūyā*), intoxication or pride (*mada*), weariness (*śrama*), indolence (*ālasya*), depression (*dainya*), anxiety (*cintā*), infatuation (*moha*), recollecting or turning things over in the mind (*smṛti*), contentment (*dhṛti*), shame (*vrīḍā*), impulsiveness (*capalatā*), joy (*harṣa*), agitation (*āvega*), stupor (*jaḍatā*), pride or arrogance (*garva*), despair (*viṣāda*), eagerness (*autsukya*), drowsiness (*nidrā*), convulsions (*apasmāra*), sleepiness (*supta*), awakening (*vibodha*), indignation (*amarṣa*), dissimulation or hiding under false appearance (*avahittha*), ferocity (*ugratā*), thoughtfulness (*mati*), sickness (*vyādhi*), insanity (*unmāda*), the "dying" experience (*maraṇa*), fright (*trāsa*), and hesitation (*vitarka*).

Since Bharata's primary goal was to provide detailed instructions to actors on how best to express emotions on the stage, he went on to describe in detail the emotions from the entire list. In the seventh chapter of his *Nāṭyaśāstra* Bharata provides a detailed account of the objective and contributing causes as well as overt expressions (*anubhāva*s) of each of the durable as well as transitory emotions. He distinguishes three types of expressions: verbal, physical (shrugs, glances, knitting the eyebrows and the like), and physiological. The third, physiological type of expressions (called *sāttvika bhāva*s) are in turn divided into the following eight categories: stiffness of the body, perspiration, horripilation or bristling of hairs on the head or other parts of the body, voice-breaking, trembling, changing skin color, shedding tears, and fainting. Bharata was careful in noting that visible expressions of emotion are partly determined by human nature (*loka svabhāva saṁsiddha*), and partly guided by social customs (*lokayātrānugāmin*). He suggests that acting on the stage is, and should be, guided by our understanding of both human nature and social customs. To help get a sense of Bharata's analysis, let us examine his account of one of the emotions: Shame, he suggests, is *caused* by doing things that are considered inappropriate, such as disobeying elders, transgression of normal expectations, or nonfulfillment of one's promise. It should be *expressed* by hiding one's face, looking down rather than facing up, drawing lines or doodling, playing with one's ring or dress, biting nails, and the like. Actors and dancers in India continue to be guided by Bharata's instructions till this day (see Paranjpe 1998, for a more detailed discussion).

The brief account of Bharata's view should make it clear that his approach is comprehensive, aimed at covering the entire gamut of human emotions. In keeping with the assumption of the resemblance and continuity between human and animal kingdoms, the grounding of human emotions in animal nature is explicitly recognized. At the same time, the shaping of emotions through social conventions is also

clearly recognized. Regardless of his focus on art, Bharata's approach is analytical and naturalistic, and in this way it displays crucial aspects of the spirit of science. But with his focus on art, especially the performing arts such as dance and drama, Bharata examined the role of emotions in the aesthetic appreciation of their expression by the spectators. Important in this context is his concept of *rasa*, which is arguably a most distinctive Indian contribution to the understanding of the nature of the experience of emotions. The word *rasa* literally means juice as in the case of fruit juice, an essence, or elixir, as well as the taste or relish of such fluids. In the context of the experience of the work of art such as a poem or a painting, and in particular in the context of witnessing of the performance of a play, it means the aesthetic relish, or the relishable quality inherent in a work of art.

In Bharata's view, there is a close relationship between the basic emotions and the aesthetic moods each one of them evoke when presented in a drama, dance, or other forms of art. Table 6.1 presents the eight major emotions (*bhāva*s) and the corresponding aesthetic moods (*rasa*s) they evoke.

According to Bharata, only the major emotions are capable of producing aesthetic moods (*rasa*s) of the corresponding type. The portrayal of minor or transitory emotions in a performance can help embellish the central aesthetic mood of a drama, but in Bharata's opinion, no effective work of art could be based on jealousy, shame, anxiety, or other "transitory" emotions as its central theme. Bharata admitted only eight aesthetic moods corresponding to eight major emotions. Although Bharata's views have remained popular over many centuries, they were not taken as the gospel truth, but rather subjected to critical analysis and serious debates in a long line of successive generations of scholars who helped deepen and enrich our understanding of aesthetics as well as emotions. A most important in this respect was the work of Abhinavagupta (ca. 990–1020), who wrote an important commentary on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Although remarkably influential, Abhinavagupta was neither the first nor the last in this scholarly tradition. For our purpose it is neither possible nor necessary to survey the varied contributions to this field; we may focus only on the most distinctive aspects of their views of the nature of emotional and aesthetic experience, and how it can contribute to human well-being.

Table 6.1 Bharata's eight durable emotions and corresponding aesthetic moods

Major (durable) emotions (*bhāva*s)	Major aesthetic moods (*rasa*s)
Erotic feeling (*rati*)	Love (*śṛṅgāra*)
Mirth (*hāsa*)	The comic (*hāsya*)
Sorrow (*śoka*)	Pathos (*karuṇa*)
Anger (*krodha*)	The furious (*raudra*)
Energy/enthusiasm (*utsāha*)	The heroic (*vīra*)
Fear (*bhaya*)	Horror (*bhayānaka*)
Disgust (*jugupsā*)	The odious (*bībhatsa*)
Astonishment (*vismaya*)	The marvelous (*adbhuta*)

6.2.2 The Paradoxical Nature of Aesthetic Moods

It is a matter of common experience that, although people attend plays mainly for entertainment, the range of emotions they portray is not restricted to comedies displaying mirth or erotic situations. Indeed, tragedies often prove to be block busters as much as comedies do, and this trend goes back to ancient Greece where tragedies were quite popular. Then again it is not only women who like tear-jerkers; men, too, *pay* to attend shows that display unpleasant emotions such as tragedies and even horror movies. It is a well-known paradox that art has the power to make "enjoyable" even the most unpleasant portrayal of tears, blood—and even filth. This and other paradoxes of the experience of art were among the issues that scholars in Bharata's tradition addressed.

Another paradox addressed during the early stages of the development of the *rasa* theory was the fact that the emotional state of the spectators can sometimes be totally at odds with the dramatic portrayal of emotions with which they resonate. Imagine, for instance, a play in which Rāma, the hero of the epic Rāmāyaṇa, is shown in a state of deep despair while searching for his beloved wife Sītā after she was kidnapped by Rāvaṇa. It would hardly be surprising if men or women who might have experienced the pangs of separation sometime during their married life would cry in empathy with Rāma's distress. Now imagine that a young couple on their honeymoon is watching the same scene. Obviously, they have never experienced separation from each other, nor would they have a reason to imagine being separated in the future due to kidnapping or any other tragic reasons. And yet, they too would shed tears, although the sadness they feel would not be their own feeling. Indeed, the spectators attending a play would be in highly diverse moods at the time of leaving home to attend the play, and yet most of them seem to resonate with the specific mood being displayed on the stage. The question which arises in this context is: "whose emotions are they that the spectators share in common while watching a play"?

One of the earliest attempts at answering this question was by Lollaṭa sometime during the ninth century. He suggested that it is the intense emotions of the *character* such as Rāma that a drama conveys. The emotions of the character may be perceived as resulting from objective causes (missing wife), intensified by contributing factors (helplessness while in exile), expressed through overt actions (roaming everywhere in search), and further intensified by secondary emotions (guilt from being unable to protect her, etc.). This analysis by Lollaṭa invoked strong criticisms and long arguments among a chain of scholars over the centuries. In the controversy that ensued, the focus was turned to each possible alternative as the possible "owner" of the emotions aroused by a scene in a drama, and each contributor to the situation was eliminated one by one as the rightful owner.

The reasoning behind the rejection of each component in a drama would be somewhat like this: Lollaṭa's answer, namely the character as the true source of shared emotion is easily refuted since the character portrayed may not be a real person, but a fiction of imagination. This would be amply clear in current times

even more than medieval times, since it is common these days of animation, where a totally fictitious character such as Bambi, the imaginary fawn, is shown being scared of a wolf on the prowl. Yet the spectators "feel" the fright of a helpless creature. The emotions portrayed could not belong to the playwright who is obviously free to portray diverse characters, real or imagined, in situations that she may have never experienced in her own life. Likewise, the actor may be called on to play character in distress immediately after getting the news of winning a lottery—and may do it quite effectively. And as the fictitious example of the couple crying on their honeymoon illustrates, the emotions commonly shared by the audience would not be of the spectators' own. Thus, the ownership of the emotional experience shared by an audience cannot be pinned down on any one party in the context of a drama. As a way out of this conundrum, the theory of *rasa* came up with the concept of the "generalization" (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*) of emotions. The conclusion is that aesthetic appreciation or *rasa* is an emotional experience commonly shared by many individuals; it belongs to a transindividual social reality.

Over the centuries of the development of the concept of *rasa*, various explanations were offered to help explain the power of drama as well as other forms of art to evoke a *common* response among aesthetes (*rasika*s) regardless of the *diversity* in their background and real-life experiences. In the case of performing arts such as drama or dance, sharing or generalization of feelings was thought to be made possible by the power of acting (gestures, intonation, shedding tears and the like), and by the portrayal of the common causal factors that are widely believed to lead to the basic emotions. In poetry and other audible forms of art, generalization was attributed to the power of words to communicate primary meanings based on their established usage (*abhidhā*), and secondary meanings through metaphor and other figures of speech (*alaṁkāra*). In regard to the spectators of drama or dance, as well as the readers of poetry or fiction, sharing of a common aesthetic experience is made possible by the process of delectation (*bhojakatva vyāpāra*) occurring in their minds while witnessing a work of art. This process is comparable to the tasting of delectable food, which we tend to "chew" (*carvaṇa*, or sipping slowly as in wine-tasting) while enjoying its taste. In the delectation of a work of art we "enjoy" not only love and laughter but also sorrow, fear, and even disgust, just as we enjoy the tart and bitter tastes along with the sweet while tasting a gourmet recipe.

6.2.3 Implications of the Concept of Rasa

A close look at the concept of *rasa* and the idea of the generalization of emotions would indicate their profound implications. First, the fact of the sharing emotions in the appreciation of art suggests that emotions are not confined to individuals, let alone being grounded in the bodily organs or tissues, as would be suggested by a biological or physicalist view of emotions. What is implied here is that emotions belong to a *supra-individual* and an essentially *social* reality, which makes the sharing and generalization of emotions possible in the first place. Second, what

accounts for the power of art to *communicate* emotions is that they are inseparable from the *meanings* associated with them. And the meanings are not located in the biochemical infrastructure of human bodies, but in signs, both verbal and non-verbal, that have the capacity to *express* emotions. Abhinavagupta was one of the pioneers who explained the capacity of signs (*vyañjaka*) like words or gestures to convey meanings (*vyañjanā*). This topic is part of the philosophy and psychology of language and poetics, which is beyond the scope of this chapter. But there is another aspect of the theory of *rasa* that provides an insight of significance to psychology. This aspect deals with the connection of emotions with the ego.

The close connection between emotions and the ego is indicated in the concept of ego-involvement. It is the individual's investment of affect in objects, whether a strong attraction for a coveted prize, or intense hatred for an enemy, that "binds" him to things and persons in his world. According to the theory of *rasa*, arts have a capacity for *loosening* this connection if only in a temporary way. It is common knowledge that people often wish to go to a movie or a play whether in a good mood or bad; to celebrate a success or to get away from depression following a major loss. Whatever be the conditions in their real life, once they are drawn in by the power of the dramatic presentation, individuals get immersed in a common aesthetic mood, whether it is pathos resulting from a tragedy or mirth from a comedy. It is as if while leaving home for an evening at the movies the spectators leave behind the concerns with which their egos were preoccupied, and it is the *distancing* from one's ego that permits getting immersed into a generalized mode of experience. The artistic creations are able to create a distance between the ego normally immersed into the travails of real life on the one hand, and the present world of make-believe on the other. It is this distancing that enables us to "enjoy" even negative emotions such as fear and disgust. This idea is succinctly expressed in the words of a contemporary author, Dhayagude (1981): "Rasa is nothing but an experience of the basic psychological proclivities in our nature in an ennobled and heightened form *without any selfish, practical and carnal preoccupations*" (p. 79; emphasis added). As we shall see in the following section, it is this capacity of the arts to temporarily uplift a person from her mundane concerns that forms the basis of an important *application* of insights coming from the dramaturgical studies of Bharata and his followers.

6.2.4 Transformation of Emotion in Religious Devotion

In order to understand how the psychological aspects of the *rasa* theory are applied to the understanding of the role of emotion and its transformation in religious devotion, it is necessary to take a brief look at the historical background and the cultural context of religious devotion in India.

The origin of the tradition of religious devotion in India is traced back to ancient times. The earliest expression of religious devotion is found in southern parts of India in poems composed in Tamil by the saints of the Āḻvār tradition who wrote

poems in praise of Lord Viṣṇu. The earliest period of this tradition is said to extend from 4203 BCE to 2706 BCE, and the tradition was revived again in the medieval period (see Dasgupta 1922/1975, Vol. 3, Chap. 27). In the northern part of India, the primary object of devotion was Kṛṣṇa as described in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa,* the epic *Mahābhārata,* and the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and Rāma the hero of the epic *Rāmāyaṇa*. While the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is considered the foundational work on devotion (*bhakti*), Nārada's *Bhakti Sūtra* explains the nature of *bhakti* in an expository format. Rāmānuja (1011–1137), the great exponent of the qualified nondualism (*viśiṣṭādvaita*) offered an interpretation of the Vedānta, which provides a philosophical basis for *bhakti* in the Vaiṣṇava tradition. However, the credit for providing a systematic account of *bhakti* within the dramaturgical theories of Bharata and his followers goes to Rūpa Goswāmī (1489–1564) and his nephew Jīva Goswamī (1513–1598). Their views are presented in a series of works such as Rūpa Goswāmī's *Ujjwalanīlamaṇi* and *Bhaktirasāmṛta Sindhu*.

Working within the tradition of Bharata the Goswamīs conceptualize religious devotion or *bhakti* as a *rasa*. Indeed, they go back in history well beyond Bharata's *Nāṭyśāstra* to derive the authority for this concept in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.7), where the infinitely blissful Brahman, the single ultimate principle of reality, is described as a *rasa* (*raso vai saḥ*). As noted, Bharata restricted the number of *rasa*s to eight, but Abhinavagupta added quietude (*śānta*) as the ninth *rasa*. The list was further extended by Rudraṭa (800–850) who added friendly affection (*preyān, sneha*) and by Bhoja (of unknown date) who proposed love for children (*vatsala*) as one more. The Goswāmīs built on this tradition, proposing devotion to God, *bhakti*, as the *ultimate rasa* that encompasses and supersedes all the *rasa*s conceived by earlier theorists.

Here we need not go into the various arguments for or against the claim of this or that form of *rasa*. What is important for us to note is that, according to Nārada's (n.d./1972) *Bhakti Sūtra* (1.2), *bhakti* is defined as the highest form of love (*parama prema rūpā*). It is celestial love which manifests all forms of love in various types of human relationships such as parent–child, master–servant, friendship, and conjugal or romantic love. Any such human form of love, when addressed to God, can bring about a total transformation of an individual by completely immersing her in celestial love. A primary means in the process of such transformation is the rich trove of literature that portrays the divine in human form. Foremost in this literature is the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, in which Kṛṣṇa is portrayed in a variety of role relationships: as the adorable little son to his adoptive parents, Nanda and Yaśodā, as a close boyhood friend to Sudāmā, and most of all as a youth the enchanting paramour of a number of milkmaids of the village of Vraja. And then again in the epic *Mahābhārata* Kṛṣṇa is portrayed in a supportive and dependable brotherly relationship with the much wronged Draupadī, as an astute strategist in the Pāṇḍava brothers' war against their cousins, and as friend, philosopher, and guide to Arjuna giving lessons in life's philosophy on the battlefield. To put it simply, the character of Kṛṣṇa is an exceptionally rich character that is presented as an ideal son, ideal brother, friend, lover, philosopher-guide, and so on.

In a parallel fashion, the epic *Rāmāyaṇa* portrays Rāma, another incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu, the sustainer of the world, in relationships with alter roles that are idealized. Thus, Lakṣmaṇa is portrayed as an ideal and most devoted brother, Sītā as a most devoted wife, Hanumān as an ideal servant, and Rāma himself as an ideal king—if not as an ideal husband (since he placed his role as a king above his role as a husband). It would appear as if the very purpose of the epic *Rāmāyaṇa* is to present the cultural ideals in the tradition of *dharma*. The entire stories of the epics *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* as well as the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* have been told and retold over centuries. Specific episodes therein have inspired poems, plays, dance dramas, and even TV serials so that their characters have become an integral part of the very fabric of the Indian culture. Narrated repeatedly in varied forms in over a dozen of major languages and numerous dialects, even the illiterate folk know the stories so well that enthusiastic villagers stage dramas based on stories from the epics such that illiterate youth enact roles in an extempore fashion without the help of a written script.

That literature and the arts often serve as a means to propagate the ideals of a culture is a fact common to cultures around the world. Societies use children's bedtime stories, whether of an imaginary big bad wolf, or a legendary Robin Hood, or mythical Super Man, as a means to help learn the difference between the hero and the villain, between right and wrong. While the popular Indian literature mentioned above works in a similar way, there is something different in the Indian culture. Although God is believed to be an abstract principle in many religions, with the attendant opposition to idolatry, in Hinduism, the portrayal of God in a human form is thought to be a way of making Him more easily accessible to a large majority of people who are unable to think at higher levels of abstraction. Although devotion to the divine as an abstract and quality-less principle (*nirguṇa bhakti*) is recognized and has been an integral part of the tradition, the worship of God presented in a human form—as Kṛṣṇa or Rāma—makes good *psychological* sense if we recognize the findings of Kohlberg (1981) and others that only a minority of the population at large can cope with thinking or moral reasoning at higher levels of cognitive and moral development. In Christianity, too, the humanization of God is not unheard of; love for God is conveyed in popular Christmas carols such as "the little Lord Jesus" and similar others is a case in point. Then again, while in Christianity God is viewed as a father-figure (and Freud made much of it), in Hinduism, the divine is viewed in varied role relationships—as mother, father, brother, child, friend, and so on. This is precisely the point that the Goswamīs focus on in their analysis of the process of personal transformation via playing various roles vis-à-vis the divine. Once the role relationships are viewed in the light of role-playing in a drama, the Goswamīs can bring to bear the theory of *rasa* as theoretical framework for understanding *bhakti*.

To help explain the perspective of the Goswamīs, it will be useful to quote Goswami (1982), a contemporary descendent of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇva tradition of Rūpa and Jīva Goswami, who explains their approach in the following manner:

> Because of its finite basis . . . worldly love . . . cannot lead to infinite and eternal bliss, and it is to this that the human quest tends. The limited phenomenal *rasa* must finally be transmuted into the transcendent, absolute *rasa*. To attain such a *rasa* the devotee chooses a personally suitable mode of relation with Krishna [*sic*] from those exemplified by the people of Vraja. The deep loving relation is crystallized in certain conceits that a devotee must adopt. One may regard Krishna as one's master, charge, friend, or beloved. Such conceits, remembered from dramatic situations in Vraja and gradually appropriated, give rise to permanent relationships. One comes to consider Krishna as a master (*dāsya*), a son (*vātsalya*), a friend (*sakhya*) or a beloved (*mādhurya*). When catalyzed by ancillary factors, these modes of intense attraction and attachment (*rati*), the substantive causes (*sthāyi-bhāva*) of love, culminate in the ultimate aesthetic experience of Krishna-*rasa*. Such realization is the highest form of love.[7]. (Goswami 1982, p. 79)

The transmuting of phenomenal *rasa* as experienced in ordinary human relationships into a transcendental and "absolute" *bhakti rasa* is not as easy as playing a role as a Hanumān in the drama of Rām Līlā played in front of large crowds every year. Indeed, if it were that simple, we would have saints galore all over India. It is obvious that the most common form of expression of *bhakti* in India is prayer and worship whether at home or in temples, and this form does not imply any role-playing. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* mentions nine forms in which its *bhakti* often manifests in the behavior of people.

It may be noted that the first six forms of the expression of *bhakti* from the list of nine do not involve any role-playing. They imply very little if any degree of *intimacy* with God; He is simply the object of reverence. Acts such as salutation (offering *namaskāra*), offering flowers, food (*naivedya*) or incense, and even singing prayers (*ārati, stotram*), whether individually or collectively, are primarily periodic rituals that are often made rather casually and without much emotion. Most of these, for much of the time, are engaged in with a minimum of ego-involvement. The seventh and eighth forms, namely serving Him, respectively, as His servant or dealing with Him as a friend, are different from all forms mentioned before; they involve role-playing vis-à-vis the Divine. The last item on the list is "offering one's self to Him" (*ātmanivedanam*), is different from role-playing as such, and this needs some explanation. To this end, we may turn to Rūpa Goswāmī's view, which is summarized in Table 6.3.

As can be easily seen, Rūpa Goswāmī has built a scheme on the foundations of the *bhakti* tradition, which included becoming a servant and friend of God, levels 7 and 8, respectively, in the list of nine forms of *bhakti*, and then adding the insights of the *rasa* tradition. Rūpa includes quietude (*śānta*), friendship (*preyān*), and love for a child (*vātsalya*) that were added to Bharata's original list of eight *rasa*s proposed by the latter's followers, and further adds *bhakti rasa* on top.

A careful look at Rūpa's scheme presented in Table 6.3 would show that, following Bharata's model, he identifies the emotions that become transformed into corresponding *rasa*s, and *ranks* them in a systematic order. The logic behind the

[7]Here Goswami refers the reader to Sects. 110–111 of Jīva Gosvāmī's *Prītisandarbha*, mentioning p. 67 of the text edited by Purīdāsa. In the text edited by Shriharidasa Shastri, the relevant ideas may be found particularly in the Hindi commentary on p. 370.

Table 6.2 The nine forms of the expression of *bhakti*

1. Listening to the stories about God (*śravaṇam*)
2. Singing songs and chanting (*kīrtanam*)
3. Remembering or repeating God's name (*viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam*)
4. Offering foot-salutation (*pādasevanam*)
5. Worshipping by offering flowers, food, incence, etc. (*arcanam*)
6. Offering salutation and praise (*vandanam*)
7. Offering service or becoming his servant (*dāsyam*)
8. Cultivating friendship or love for him (*sakhyam*)
9. Offering one's self to Him (*ātmanivedanam*)[a]

From *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (5.25)
[a]The translations are by A.C. Paranjpe

ranking of devotional moods—starting from quietude through reverence for superiors, friendship among equals, affection for subordinates, and romantic love—should be clear: they reflect an ascending order of *intimacy* with the deity. This implies the idea that greater the intimacy, stronger and deeper the experience of celestial love.[8] But then what sense does it make that the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* places "offering the self to Him" at the end of the list (see Table 6.2), apparently suggesting that it is the highest form of the nine varieties of the expression of *bhakti*? This may be interpreted to mean that, while immersing one's ego in the divine through increasingly intimate love for Him would indicate deeper forms of *bhakti*, its ultimate aim is total surrender at His feet so that the devotee's ego is dissolved.

An interesting expression of the meaning of the dissolution of the ego of a self-surrendering devotee is found in the poetry of the Marathi Saint Tukārāma (seventeenth century), who is widely considered one of the greatest devotees (*bhaktas*) of all times. "I saw me dying with my own eyes, and what an incomparable spectacle it was! The entire universe was filled with bliss", says Tukārāma (seventeenth century/1973, poem #2669).[9] Obviously nobody can see himself dying; it is a poetic expression, the meaning of which he explains in the same poem. Once upon a time, he says, he was overcome with egotism; it is by ridding himself of the same that such good times followed. Overcoming egotism is a most essential feature of the ideal condition often described as *kaivalya, nirvāṇa,* and *mukti*. However, Tukārāma,

[8]It is not only the level of intimacy of love that is involved in the ability of *bhakti* for a positive transformation of the individual, but also the intensity of the emotion as long as it is directed toward God. Thus, according to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (7.1.29) whether it is the intense erotic love for God (as in the case of the milkmaids of Vraja), or intense hatred (for King Śiśupāla), or fear (Kaṁsa), when such emotions are single mindedly directed toward God, they lead to release the individual from demerit from past actions. The words suggesting this are:

kāmād dveṣād bhayād snehād yathā bhaktyeśvare manaḥ |,
āveśya tadagham hitvā bahavastadgatiṁ gatāḥ ||.

[9]The Marathi text of Tukārāma's poems (see Tukārāma 1973).

Table 6.3 Varieties of devotional moods and the corresponding emotions

Devotional moods (*rasa*s)	Corresponding emotions (*bhāva*s)
Major devotional moods	
1. *Śānta bhakti*	Quietude (*śānta*)
2. *Prīti bhakti, dāsya bhakti*	Reverence for superiors (*dāsya*)
3. *Preyān bhakti, maitrī bhakti*	Friendship among equals (*sakhya*)
4. *Vatsala bhakti*	Affection for subordinates (*vātsalya*)
5. *Madhurā bhakti*	Romantic love (*śṛṅgāra*)
Minor devotional moods	
6. The comic (*hāsya*)	Mirth (*hāsa*)
7. The marvelous (*adbhuta*)	Astonishment (*vismaya*)
8. The heroic (*vīra*)	Energy/enthusiasm (*utsāha*)
9. Pathos (*karuṇa*)	Sorrow (*śoka*)
10. Horror (*bhayānaka*)	Fear (*bhaya*)
11. The furious (*raudra*)	Anger (*krodha*)
12. The odious (*bībhatsa*)	Disgust (*jugupsā*)

like most followers of the path of devotion, says he does not care for *mukti* (poem #23006).[10] Devotees like him would be reborn again and again rather than getting released from the unending chain of *karma*, since it is best to get fully immersed in celestial love for perpetuity. We shall return to this issue again in Chap. 9 of this book when we examine the life of Tukārāma as a prototypical example of a successful completion of the journey on *bhakti mārga*, the path of devotion.

6.2.5 Rasa *in the Context of Modern Psychology*

Understanding and interpreting Indian psychology's approach to emotion in the context of contemporary psychology is particularly difficult in view of the yawning gap—historical, geographical, cultural, and ideological—which separates them. Modern psychology started under the shadow of major developments in biology and physiology in mid-nineteenth century. This was reflected in James's (1890/1983, Chap. 15) view of emotion shaped by the work of the Danish physiologist Lange so that the experience of emotion was viewed as the effect of bodily reactions rather than vice versa. Following Darwin's emphasis on the fight/flight response of animals facing their predators, the bio-chemical changes accompanying the struggle for survival were viewed as the main source of emotions such as fear. As natural sciences continue to guide the development of mainstream psychology, the physiological, neurological, and evolutionary perspectives have dominated the

[10]The Marathi words of Tukārāma (poem #2306) are:
Na lage mukti āṇi sampadā, santa saṅga deī sadā,
Tukā mhaṇe garbhavāsī sukhe ghālāve āmhāsī.

development of modern psychology of emotion. Given the bio-psycho-socio-cultural nature of human beings, an overemphasis on the biological aspects implies the relative de-emphasis on other aspects. Nevertheless, over the past half century, the cognitive, social, and cultural aspects of emotion have slowly continued to receive increasing attention. Contributions to the *Handbook of Emotion* (Lewis et al. 2010) reflect how a more well-rounded account of emotion is emerging in contemporary psychology. It is neither possible nor necessary to present an overview of this emerging perspective on emotion in contemporary psychology. We may only note some recent developments that indicate the gradual narrowing of the gap between contemporary Western and traditional Indian perspectives.

Given that art was the primary context in which Indian views of emotion developed, and insofar as the enterprise of art was alienated and mostly sequestered from science, it is particularly interesting that some recent writings have begun to echo the insights of the *rasa* theory. Note, for instance, the views expressed in a recent book on the psychology of emotion by Ellis (2005):

> Art can "inspire" us without giving us pleasure in net terms. We can sometimes find a uniquely important type of meaning by enduring or suffering through the misery, torment, and . . . horror stories . . . and ugly, disorienting paintings and music. These painful artistic experiences are not merely an alternative means toward the end of pleasure, entertainment, or decoration, but offer their own special type of symbolization-matrix for the exploration of more "existential" emotions – emotions involving the affirmation of the values we can feel. . . (p. 171)

Indeed, Ellis affirms further that "[m]any forms of love, including the love of a mother, of an erotic partner, or sometimes of a comrade in arms, are of the 'value-intensifying' rather than the 'end-attaining' variety … i.e., they are motivated to intensify our experience of the value of a posited goal or object, rather than merely to take steps to realize the goal" (p. 181). There are a few points to note here. *First*, that the relevance of art for psychology including its ability to transform emotions is recognized; *second*, it is also recognized that love in human relationships has the capacity for affirming and intensifying human goals and values; and *third*, there is an implicit criticism of the value of "tension reduction" (rather than intensification of emotion) that was popular in the heyday of behaviorism. Needless to say, Ellis's views are essentially convergent with the Indian perspectives on emotion described above.

It is particularly interesting that Ellis speaks about love in human role relationships such as mother–child and erotic partners. As we have noted, it is the intensification of love in role-play vis-à-vis an image of the divine that the tradition of *bhakti* would use as a means to self-transformation. There is a parallel trend in modern psychology where role-play is used as a technique in psychotherapy. Almost a century has passed since Moreno (1946–1969) developed "psychodrama" as a therapeutic technique centered on role-playing. The pioneering work of Moreno has led to the development of therapeutic techniques that are variations of psychodrama. In his manual for role-playing in psychotherapy, Corsini (1966) has described in detail how the technique works. He points out that, while some therapists focus on the cognitive aspects of role-playing, others focus on the emotional aspects or action components. It should be clear that George Kelly's "fixed role therapy" described

earlier in this chapter focuses on the underlying cognitive structures in an attempt to restructure them. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava focus is, clearly, on emotions associated with role-playing which they expect to transform into an all-encompassing feeling of celestial love. The fact that modern use of role-play occurs mainly in secular clinical contexts as opposed to the explicitly religious and spiritual context of *bhakti* makes for obvious differences between them. In either case, role-playing in a make-believe situation has to be transferred to real life situations in order to be effective. Nevertheless, the basic psychological principles remain essentially the same.

6.2.6 Emotions and Culture

As noted, Bharata recognized the commonality between human and animal emotions even as Darwin did. However, Bharata was also clear about the shaping of the expression of emotions by societal conventions. Moreover, the thrust of the doctrine of the generalization of emotions in the dramaturgical studies by Bharata's followers has been on the collectively shared nature of emotional experience as it is witnessed by audience of a dramatic production. This implies that emotions belong also to an interpersonal and transindividual domain, and are not restricted to an intra-individual domain as commonly presumed in modern psychology. Interestingly, as studies of psychology extend to non-Western cultures, insights from Asian cultures begin to appear within the circles of mainstream psychology. Thus, in a recent study of emotions in Japan, Uchida et al. (2009) conclude that "in Japanese cultural contexts emotions are understood as relationship-focused and *between people*, whereas in American cultural contexts emotions are understood as self-focused and *within people*" (p. 1438; emphasis added). This observation is clearly closer to the Indian insights mentioned before. On the whole, the idea of emotion as a socially constructed and culturally shaped phenomenon is gaining ground (Harré 1986). As to the understanding of the cultural shaping of emotions, two major trends are recognized. One of these is predominant in what is called "cross-cultural psychology" and the other "cultural psychology." A brief discussion of these would be useful here in view of the contemporary relevance of the Indian approach to emotion mentioned above.

The thrust of the cross-cultural studies of various psychological phenomena is on their *universal* aspects. Inspired by the natural science perspective, the attempt is ultimately to discover patterns that are common to all humans regardless of cultural differences. Insofar as cross-cultural studies of emotion are concerned, this spirit is reflected in research by Ekman (1973) and others which focused on the *expression* of emotions in various cultures of the world. The research technique commonly used in such studies involves showing sets of photographs thought to portray specific emotions such as fear or disgust to a sample of subjects, and ask them to name the emotion. The results indicate the degree to which people across cultures are able to correctly recognize the emotion expressed in the photos. In a survey of such studies Keltner and Ekman (2000) conclude that "the independently conducted

studies by Ekman and his collaborators and by Izard strongly suggested universality in interpreting facial expressions of emotion" (p. 237). Here again, true to the spirit of the natural sciences, the focus of such studies is on what is objectively measureable as distinguished from the subjective experience of emotions; and this is reflected in the method of counting the proportion of correct versus incorrect responses of experimental subjects in recognizing the emotion that the stimulus photo is supposed to express.

The cross-cultural psychologists' aim at the development of a universal science of psychology is often compared with the idea of phonetics, which studies sounds in languages of the world on the basis of the physics of sounds. Such an approach is called an "etic" approach based on the universal principles of phon*etic*s as distinguished from an "emic," which likes the science of phon*emic*s, recognizes that each language uses phon*emes*, or sounds that are specific to a particular language. Despite their attempt to develop a universal science of psychology, cross-cultural psychologists do recognize that all theories are shaped by, and therefore limited in some way or other by the culture of their origin (Berry 1969). While such limitations are recognized at the theoretical level, on the practical level limitations of their research methods are recognized as well. Usually the limitations of such research methods are revealed when the results do not fit expected patterns probably because responses do not relate to particular "items" in a research instrument such as a questionnaire. A common reason for results that appear odd is that some questions do not make sense in certain cultural context outside of the culture in which they were framed and made sense. However, it is not common in cross-cultural psychology to explore the views of the subjects, since the observable *fact* of their behavioral responses is valued more than the meanings subjectively assigned within differing cultural frameworks. By making some changes in unworkable items, cross-cultural researchers expect to remove cultural limitations of their research instruments. Indeed, Berry (1969) recognizes the importance to look at a culture from the "natives' viewpoint" as suggested by the anthropologist Malinovsky. However, in most cross-cultural research the natives' viewpoint is taken into consideration at the most by consulting native research collaborators on the adequacy of specific items of the research instrument that appear to be misfits. Whether or not the whole research question makes sense as viewed from the vantage point of the alien cultures is not the question of concern within the field of cross-cultural psychology.

The cultural psychologists' approach is different from that of the cross-cultural psychologists' described above. Unlike the latter's insistence on the objective observation of facts such as the subjects' putting a mark on a questionnaire, the cultural psychologist is interested in how the subjects *understand* their world as informed and interpreted by people in *their* cultural milieu. Unlike the universalist aspirations of the cross-cultural psychologist, the cultural psychologist is keen to find out the distinctive features of the worldview of the people they study. A cultural psychologist's study of the experience of "*lajja*" among people of the Indian subcontinent is worth describing here for at least two good reasons. *First*, it illustrates certain distinctive aspects of emotional experience in India, and *second*, it incorporates both folk as well as classical perspective described above.

As Menon and Shweder (1994) point out, it is difficult to translate the term *lajja* (*lajya* in Oria) with any single term in English, such as shame, embarrassment, modesty, or shyness. This difficulty in translation is suggestive of the distinctive nature of the emotion it designates. In their effort to understand the nature of the experience of *lajja* Menon and Schweder (1994) used various techniques. One of these techniques was to present their subjects with an icon that shows the Goddess Kali biting her tongue after inadvertently stepping on the body of her consort, the mighty Śiva the destroyer while wantonly dancing after killing a demon. In the Hindu community of Orissa the biting her tongue by Kali is viewed as an overt expression of her feeling of *lajja*. To explore what such a feeling means to their respondents, Menon and Shweder extensively interviewed some learned men considered to be experts in Hindu iconography and mythology, as well as about a hundred men and women in various walks of life from the upper as well as lower classes of the society. They identified over twenty odd specific ideas, assumptions, and themes in which the concept of *lajja* was embedded in the minds of the respondents. They point out that an important aspect of the story behind Kali's biting of her tongue is the idea that, although she is powerful enough to destroy Śiva, who is Himself capable of dissolving everything in the world, she exercises self-restraint, and is willing to take on her role as a woman and express her deference to her man. Although it is not possible to explain here the complexities of the experience of *lajja* carefully and systematically explored by Menon and Shweder, a few lines from their essay may be quoted to briefly convey the nature of *lajja*.

> To have a sense of *lajja* is to be civilized; to know one's rightful place in society; to conduct oneself in a becoming manner; to be conscious of one's duties and responsibilities; to persevere in the performance of social role obligations; to be shy, modest, and deferential and not encroach on the prerogatives of others; and to remain silent or lower one's eyes in the presence of social superiors. (p. 277)

It should be quite clear that Menon and Shweder's cultural psychology goes much deeper into the phenomenon of emotional experience than the cross-cultural studies of Ekman and others which, relatively speaking, scratch only the surface of the emotions deeply shaped by culture. In another study of *lajja* by Shweder and Haidt (2000), the perspective was extended to explain how the Indian perspectives on emotion were enriched by the insights into the tradition of Bharata's dramaturgical studies, thus adding depth to understanding emotion in the context of Indian culture.

Over the past several years, His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama has inspired several Western thinkers in psychology and other disciplines. One of the topics of the East–West dialogue is compassion, which is clearly concerned with the psychology of emotion. Note the following words that appear in a book that presents a set of papers presented at a conference in the presence of the Dalai Lama.

> [T]he dominant note of the biobehavioural sciences in the West has been tragic-machismo: We find our origins in ancestors we call "killer apes," ponder our potential for violence, explore the genetic and biochemical bases of our capacity for selfishness, depression, and anxiety. In contrast, Tibetan Buddhism has long celebrated the human potential for compassion, is dedicated to studying the scope, expression, and training of compassionate feeling and action, and sees compassion as a key to enduring happiness and, even more

> fundamentally, spiritual transformation. Given this, two questions immediately suggest themselves. (1) Why these differences? And (2) given our understandings of our points of difference and of overlap, what can we expect to learn from each other when we start to talk? (Davidson and Harrington 2002, p. v)

The dawning of compassion as a result of successful spiritual transformation is an issue at the core of the Indian approach to the psychology of emotion. The words quoted above are suggestive of the fact that Indian psychology is no longer a historical curiosity; its insights are beginning to be part of psychology in the Global Village.

6.3 Volition

We now turn to a discussion of volition, which is the essential psychological process for the person (*jīva*) as agent (*kartā*), even as cognition and emotion are crucial for the person as, respectively knower (*jñātā*) and enjoer/sufferer (*bhoktā*). In Indian thought volition and karma are intimately interrelated. We discussed in Chap. 2 the concept karma and the Doctrine of Karma in some detail. Without repeating what is covered earlier, we will briefly consider in this section karma in its relation to volition as a psychological process and draw the implications for pursuit of liberation/self-realization, the ultimate goal of human quest. As Śaṅkara puts it, karma is action which a person may choose to do, not to do, or do in a different way. Karma in this sense clearly means volition. The *Penguin Dictionary of Psychology* (Reber 1995) defines volition as "conscious, voluntary selection of particular action or choice from many potential actions of choices." *The Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms* by English and English (1958) gives "will" as a synonym of "volition," and clarifies that this term is "now almost never used technically in psychology."

Karma in its broad sense, as we noted, refers to action. However, it also refers to something which *results from* action, which in return may *lead to* action in future. Karma may be seen thus as the result *of* action as well as that which results *in* action. It is both a source and consequence of action, constituting the karmic circle. One action causes karma. That karma leads to another action which leaves behind new karma which in its turn produces further karma and so on. The Doctrine of Karma is an attempt to account for the karmic circle of cause and consequences of action. Various schools of Indian thought have dealt with the concept of karma in their systems and attempted to incorporate it in their theories of the mind. The prominent among them are Yoga and Theravāda Buddhism.

Yoga like several systems of classical Indian thought subscribes to the Doctrine of Karma. In *Yoga-Sūtras*, Patañjali discusses karma in Parts II and IV. In accordance with the Yoga Doctrine of Karma, a person's actions have effects which are stored in the form of *saṁskāra*s, which as we noted previously, stay dormant in the mind and influence one's behavior when the time is ripe for them. They bear the karmic imprints and carry karma with them. They are thus the vehicles that help

manifest karmic consequences later. The Doctrine of Karma and the notion of karmic circle suggest a kind of pervasive determinism, where one action leads to another in a continuous cycle, implying that there is little room for freedom of action. Recognizing this, Yoga develops a systematic procedure by which one can break this circle and assert her freedom. As noted earlier, it is in this context that Patañjali discusses karma in relation to *kleśa*s, the hindrances that one must overcome in her pursuit of liberation (*kaivalya*).

Providing for behavioral causation in his theory of karma, Patañjali postulates the existence of a depository for all accumulated karma in one's life. It is called *karmāśaya*, the receptacle of karma, produced by past actions, which remains potent to influence future action. It is the womb where desires for future action are born. In Yoga, *karmāśaya* is the source that generates desires, prompts behavior, and in significant ways influences one's life now and in future. It is rooted in *kleśas* (*Yoga-Sūtras,* II.2). *Kleśa*s are the afflictions that hinder proper functioning of the mind and obstruct one's progress toward liberation. There are five such afflictions. The most prominent among them are (1) ignorance of one's true nature (*avidyā*) and (2) egotism (*asmitā*), the sense of personal identity engendered by the ego, which is mistaken for the true self (II.3, 6). *Avidyā* is none other than mistaking the ego for the true self. Thus *avidyā* and *asmitā* are intimately intertwined.

Now, where does volition come in all this? Karma may be taken to mean "willed action." Will or volition is behind all actions that produce karma. The will manifests in the form of desires prompted by the stored karma. This is what happens in all karmic action. However, the mind has the ability to direct its volition bypassing desires and without the promptings from *karmāśaya*.

The mind may be guided by *dharma* instead of pushed by desires. There are then two kinds of willed action—one prompted by the *kleśa*s and the other motivated by *dharma*. The former produces black karma and the latter causes white karma to manifest. White karma is beneficial in one's pursuit of liberation, whereas black karma is detrimental to it. In addition to the two kinds of motivated volition, we may postulate the existence of pure volition. It is the kind of volition that an accomplished yogin can exercise. Actions caused by such pure volition are free from karmic consequences. According to Yoga, the *citta* has latent power *śakti* and can exercise volition and "can reflect and react back upon itself and change the passivity of its transformations into active states" (Dasgupta 1930, p. 286). Such volition goes beyond actions caused by subliminal *saṁskāra*s and *vasanā*s and actions guided by *dharma*. Such unencumbered volition carries no karma with it, black or white. We may further suggest that while the forms of action prompted by karma and *dharma* are channeled through the so-called *karmendriyas*, the pure volitional acts bypass the motor system like in the case of pure conscious experience where cognitive knowing is replaced by transcognitive realization. In other words, it may be possible to exercise pure volition in states of pure consciousness.

The notion of karma as willed action—whether the will is controlled by the accumulated karma or driven by *dharma*—is more clearly articulated in some of the Buddhist texts. For example, Buddhaghoṣa deals with these issues in his *Visuddhimagga*. In Buddhism, karma is considered as the predisposing factor that is

behind one's behavior and is responsible for the continuing cycle of births and deaths. Although one's mental states are resultants of one's karma, karma itself is produced by apperceptual acts that are free. Man's behavior is doubtless controlled and conditioned by all kinds of circumstances that include past karma. However, he is still free to exercise his volition to act differently. Buddhists manuals discuss not only how karma affects behavior in this birth and the births to follow, they also describe the nature and the strength of volitions. The volitions of such developed persons like the Buddha and the *arhats* do not carry any karma with it because they are free from evil tendencies and binding attachments. According to Buddhist thinkers, apperceptive acts that are of the character of inoperative thoughts do not transform themselves into karma.

In the Buddhist conception of the mind (see Chap. 4 for details), mind is the collective name, an aggregate of five *skandhas*. *Sankhāra* which refers to volition and other factors associated with it is one of the *skandhas*. Volition is thus an important element in the cognitive process. Volition (*cetanā*) is also seen as one of the seven universal elements (*cetacikas*) of consciousness. Volition, then, is the source of accumulated karma inasmuch as only willed actions have attendant karma. Volition is also the resource the person could use to control and eradicate karma. Volition is the mental function that coordinates and closely binds other functions of the mind. It gives direction to one's actions and also provides the necessary energy for action. In its karma producing aspect, it creates the illusion of the self, with the ego as its center. Here all actions gain ego-reference. Whenever there is ego-reference, all related actions produce karma, which in turn conditions subsequent behavior.

What is important to note here is that the ego is not an essential constituent of the mind; it is not a *skandha*; it is not even one among the seven universal elements of consciousness. It is thus an epiphenomenon resulting from the way volition functions to bind the various psychic structures. This means that the ego on the one hand is not an intrinsic structure necessary for all our mental processes and that it is on the other hand a necessary condition for generating karma. Volition is thus the source for causing karma. At the same time, as mentioned, it is also a resource to overcome karma. Buddhism recognizes that volition can be guided by such practices as meditation to function in such a way as to bypass the ego so that the consequent actions do not cause karma. Any action without ego-involvement does not simply cause karma. Volition in the sense of willed action means action with ego-reference. Volition without ego-involvement is what we called earlier pure volition, available in meditative and pure states of consciousness.

As we noted, in Yoga it is the mistaking of the ego for the true self, the root cause of *kleśa*s, which is behind karmic actions, i.e., actions that produce karma. It is what biases one's actions and stands as hurdle in her path of liberation. Volition as a function of *ahaṁkāra* is that aspect of the mind which has the karmic consequences. Similarly, in Buddhism, it is the ego-reference and involvement that is behind karmic actions. Therefore, control of the ego becomes a necessary condition for liberation. Karma Yoga is a way of molding volition to render actions free of karma and help one lead successfully on the path of liberation.

6.3.1 Karma Yoga as Means to Liberation

Karma Yoga refers to action without hankering for gains. The *Bhagavad Gītā* is commonly regarded as one of the basic sources for the understanding of the principles and practice of *karma yoga*. In modern times Tilak (1915/1971) wrote a commentary of the *Gītā* called the *Gītā-Rahasya* (or the *Secrets* of the *Gītā*) in which he suggests that the practice of *karma yoga* is the central teaching of the *Gītā* and explains its principles. The present account of *karma yoga* is based on these two sources. (We shall return to Tilak's views in greater detail in Chap. 9 of this book when we disscuss his life as an advocate and practitioner of *karma yoga*.)

According to the *Gītā* (18.14), the following five factors are involved in accounting for the totality of results of any action: (1) the location or context of action (*adhiṣṭhānam*); (2) the agent (*kartā*); (3) the various instruments available on hand (*pṛthagvidham karaṇam*); (4) the specific activities involved in the action, and finally (*vividhāḥ ceṣṭāḥ*) (5) chance, or "fate" (*daivam*). The first of these factors (called *adhiṣṭhānam*) may be understood in a broad sense as the historical, geographical, ecological, and social context in which action takes place. It should be quite clear that the outcome of an action would be quite different if it was conducted in times of a political turmoil or revolution as opposed to a period of peace and tranquility. The consequences would be different also if the same action is performed in a quiet and congenial location as opposed to a noisy and unhygienic one. Also, I cannot reach my destination fast enough if I am short of funds, a basic resource needed for the purpose. Similarly, I cannot even start on my journey unless I physically move my limbs to start walking or do the actions needed to procure a ticket. Moreover, even if I have the basic means on hand and I am prepared to move as needed, I may not be going anywhere if lightening suddenly strikes, no matter how rare chances of such mishaps might be. It should be clear that the agent of an action is only one of the multiple causes that together determine the overall result.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* (18.16) suggests that, such being the case, it is only an unintelligent person who thinks that he or she is solely responsible for the outcome while ignoring all the contributing factors. Against the background of this analysis, *Gītā* (2.47) advises us to note that only one's own actions are under one's control (*karmaṇyevādhikāraste*); the total outcome is often determined by several other factors that are beyond our control. Therefore, it says, one should neither be solely focused on the fruit of the action, nor is it necessary to despair due to the uncertainty of rewards and give up the undertakings on hand.

If the above reasoning has any force, it should be in principle possible for a person to assess the portion of the total results attributable to one's actions, and expect no more in return. What is crucial in this context is the need to carefully assess the degree to which various factors may have contributed to the results, and be sure not to expect anything more in return for one's effort. It is granted in this approach that all willed actions are directed toward an anticipated and expected outcome, whether the end product is clearly foreseen on not. It is also true that there are several activities that are casual and not directed to a specific goal, such as

witnessing passers-by while going to work, or leisurely walking in a garden. In the case of such casual activities, there is no chain of relatable consequences that such inadvertent actions lead to. However, if I fail to find my friend I had *expected* to meet, I would inquire about his whereabouts, and go on a major search to find him if his absence from home seems prolonged and mysterious. The more ego-involved we are in what we are doing or expecting, the more complex and prolonged would be the activities that follow. In his analysis of human actions Tilak puts his finger on this aspect of the intensity of the desires and insistent expectations that often prompt actions. Being too much focused on the end result is often counterproductive. It is a common observation in sports, for example, that being overly concerned about whether the ball will cross the goal line can distract a football player and make him ineffective. On the other hand, being totally involved in the play—rather than making the goal—is the key to success. More specifically, given that it is only what one can do that is in one's control, Tilak's suggestion is to focus on the task on hand, accept whatever be the results, and move on.

The term "*niṣkāma karma*" used to describe the teachings of the *Gītā* is sometimes misunderstood when the term *kāma* is understood to mean desire. As noted, the theory of *karma yoga* grants that it is the desires that normally guide willed action. Here willed actions refer to actions that have ego-reference. In the eleventh chapter of his *Gītā-Rahasya,* Tilak admits that it does not make sense to think of engaging in a course of action without any desire, for in that case it would be a random or even a meaningless activity. Desires that are ego-driven are the ones to be avoided. He goes on to a great length to explain that what the *Gītā* means in using the word *niṣkāma* is not to dispel desire, but to avoid greed and voracious or insatiable pursuit of gains (*haṅv* in Marathi). In his view, it is possible for us to systematically and gradually reduce the degree of one's ego-involvement and emotional investment in our projects on hand. One should keep doing one's duty to the best of one's ability and take the results in one's stride. The point is that over a period of time, one can gradually reduce the intensity of craving and emotional involvement so that one does not get either excessively elated by success or be deeply depressed by defeat or loss. What is emphasized here is the indifference to the fruits of action and not action itself. Thus, the ideal of the *sthitaprajña* or being a person of stable intellect (described in Chap. 2) is attained. Like the proverbial lotus leaf, one remains *in* the word, but not be *of* it.

6.3.2 Karma Yoga and Contemporary Psychology

The strategy of *karma yoga* just described is prescriptive and not purely descriptive as modern science is supposed to be. But then it is a form of applied psychology, and it makes no sense if an application of science does not indicate what can or may be done with it, and how. The conceptual basis of the whole enterprise of karma yoga involves a fundamental assumption that humans are capable of volition, or "will." As noted by English and English (1958), these concepts are rarely used in

contemporary psychology. The reasons for the rejection of will is embedded in a long history of the unending debate between two rival visions of the world; one in which every event including the casual flutter of a person's eyelid is totally determined by inexorable laws of nature, and the other which affirms human ability to freely choose between a number of alternative courses of action. Without getting into the long history of free will versus determinism controversy, we may simply note that in modern psychology there is a clear split between advocates on either side of the issue.[11] Thus, Skinner (1971) categorically denied free will in his book *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. On the opposite side is the existentialist thinker Sartre (1943/1966) who equally strongly affirmed free will, saying that as long as one has chosen not to commit suicide, one is damned to choose every step of the way. In his view, even if one ignores to choose, one has chosen by default. Although few psychologists explicitly state their position on the issue, many seem to adopt a position mid-way between the two opposite poles. James (1986/1907) calls such a position "soft determinism"; it accepts that laws of nature do determine how we behave, but leaves some room to choose among a limited number of possibilities. Such a position is also called "compatibilism" since it makes the opposing positions of free will and determinism compatible with each other. Śaṅkara adopts a similar position and provides a justification for accepting free will within the context of the Law of Karma. Śaṅkara's position essentially says that, if we do not admit free will, the entire enterprise of moral behavior would be meaningless.[12] Unlike Śaṅkara, many a modern psychologist is willing to pay the price of dumping ethics for the comfort of complete predictability of events offered by the position of "hard determinism."

Leaving aside the complex and controversial issue of free will *versus* determinism, we may note some ideas in modern psychology that are consistent with a key issue in the perspective of karma yoga, namely the thesis that people often take credit for success to themselves while ignoring the contribution of other factors. In modern psychology researchers have marshaled a lot of evidence to support the same idea which they have called the *self-serving bias* in the attribution of causal efficacy to one's own effort in case of success (Miller and Ross 1975; Greenwald 1980). Thus, a student thinks that his high marks in the test are the result of his own talent and effort, while in the case of failure the cause is bad teaching or unfair grading. As is the general trend in modern psychology, research on self-serving bias remains primarily descriptive, usually avoiding it implications for practice. For example, in a *Wikipedia Encyclopedia* article on self-serving bias (retrieved on June 5, 2013) the real-world implications of self-serving bias in the fields of interpersonal relations, workplace situations, classroom, computer technology, sports, and depression were discussed in some detail. However, nothing was said about how an

[11]For a more detailed discussion of this issue (see Paranjpe 1998, Chap. 6).

[12]In his commentary on Bādarāyaṇa's *Brahma Sūtra* (2.3.14.33) Śaṅkara explains the meaning of the former's aphoristic expression "*kartā śāstrārthatvāt*" saying that the commandments of the *śāstra*s (implying the moral sciences) will be meaningless if we do not accept the free will implied in the concept of the person as agent (*kartā*).

interested person could benefit from all such knowledge in her own life. It should be clear from the above discussion of karma yoga that the focus in Indian psychology is primarily on the application of psychological knowledge in an effort toward self-transformation.

6.4 The Various Pathways to Mokṣa: Separate or Together?

Before concluding this chapter we may take a comparative look at the three strategies toward the attainment of the common goal of *mokṣa* with a focus on three different psychological processes, namely cognition, emotion, and volition. Insofar as the three pathways are described in separate sections, they may appear to be sequestered in separate compartments such that persons interested in spiritual uplift may have to choose one and follow only that path. It is true, of course that each one of the three paths focuses on one aspect of the three aspects of the mind, cognition, emotion, or volition. However, a careful look at the accounts given above would make it clear that notwithstanding the emphasis on one aspect, there is use of other aspects as well. Note, for instance, that in the Advaita path of knowledge, one of the qualifications suggested as prerequisite for persons wishing to tread on the path of knowledge is becoming dispassionate about worldly and other-worldly gains (*ihāmutra phala virāga*). This would imply reducing one's urge for and emotional involvement in obtaining some or other kind of results. This is the same kind of strategy as the avoidance of greed and rapacious pursuit of gains recommended in Tilk's interpretation of *karma yoga*. This again is similar to the cultivation of affective neutrality (*vairāgya*), which is one of the two chief aids suggested in Patañjali's *dhyāna yoga*. Thus emotion, in terms of *lowering* its investment is common to the paths of knowledge and action where, respectively, cognition and volition are emphasized. Interestingly, however, this stands in contrast with *bhakti yoga* where an *intensification* of emotions is suggested. But it is important to note that such intensification is expected mainly of love, and even of fear or hatred *only* when it is directed toward the divine. The fact that the garden variety of *bhakti* is guided by worldly or other-worldly gains is, ironically, opposite to the teachings of most forms of yoga. The higher forms of *bhakti* are spiritually superior because loving like a mother is a selfless form of love.

Turning now to volition we may note that, although most crucial for karma yoga, volition and action are integral part of the other forms of yoga as well. In *bhakti yoga*, for instance, most forms of its expression (the first six of the nine forms listed in Table 6.2 to be specific) involve activities involved in worship and prayer. In *jñāna yoga* the process of reflection (*manana*) implies *mental activity* of repeated and relentless examination of the nature of self, and Patañjali's *dhyāna yoga* suggests relentless effort (*abhyāsa*) as one of the two most important aids to the attainment of liberation. In other words, there is no *exclusive* involvement of

specific aspects of the mind, whether cognition, emotion, or volition in the four major forms of yoga. This makes sense in that the person is *simultaneously* a knower, enjoyer/sufferer, and agent, although cognition, emotion, and volition may sometimes appear to follow one another.

In any case, it should be clear that the pathways described above are meant for individuals to traverse in the course of their spiritual development, and there is no specific reason why a person must exclusively follow one or the other. Although each person must essentially pull one's own weight, spiritual uplift is not entirely a solitary affair; one learns the ropes in a community of spiritual seekers. The practice of the various forms of yoga is an integral part of several living traditions, and one may learn theory as well as practice through informal exposure as well as formal initiation and training by a guru. There are numerous institutions such as traditional monasteries and even a few modern-type universities where yoga is taught. There are in principle restrictions on who can practice what kind of yoga and to whom one can go for guidance.

Traditionally, there are two major forms of spiritual practice. One recommends renunciation from social involvements (called the *nivṛtti mārga*) and may even require the serious aspirant to become a monk (*saṅnyāsin*) and become totally involved with the pursuit of individual liberation. The other asks one to become socially involved (*pravṛtti mārga*) and demands that he/she live the life of a normal householder (*gṛhastha*) and perform one's duties appropriate to one's station in society—rather than become a full time practitioner. Śaṅkara, for instance in his commentary of the *Gītā* (3.3) suggests those who are keen on Self-realization may bypass the stage of the householder and get initiated into the final stage of life as a renuniciate (*saṅnyāsin*). Some followers of AdvaitaVedānta, for instance insist that liberation can be attained *only* through knowledge (*jñānādeva tu kaivalyam*). Indeed, Śaṅkara (1921) himself (in *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, stanza #11) declared that actions can be useful only for clearing up one's mind; not even a million acts can lead to liberation. Some followers of Advaita, however, advocate a judicious combination of the elements of the path of knowledge and action (*jñāna-karma-samuccaya*). Tilak's interpretation of the teachings of *Gītā* is different from Śaṅkara's because unlike the former he does not consider *jñāna* as the only way to liberation. Rather he views that a combination of inquiry into the nature of the *self*, and action with gradual reduction in ego-involvement, and surrendering one's ego to the Divine ensures gradual progress ultimately leading to *mokṣa*.[13] Another example of a long and clear tradition of a syncretic approach to spiritual development that selectively combines the elements of *jñāna-, bhakti-*, and *dhyāna-yoga* as well as various Tantric practices is found in the Datta *sampradāya* named after the Dattātreya, the three-headed deity (see Dhere 1958/1999; Rigopoulos 1998).

The history of Indian culture shows a continual development of techniques for spiritual development over the millennia. There has been interaction and healthy

[13]For a detailed discussion of Tilak's views and their reflection in his behavior (see Paranjpe 2011b).

exchange among various schools of thought. With some variations, the technique of concentrative meditation described in Patañjali's *dhyāna mārga* has been common part of practices followed by most Indian spiritual traditions, including those of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and the Sikh faith. In the fifteenth century CE several saints of the Dattatreya tradition attracted the following of many Muslims, and reciprocally, several Sufi saints had many Hindu followers (Dhere 1958/1999). In the poems of Saint Kabir (1440–1518) we see a blending of Sufism with Hindu *bhakti*. The openness of the spiritual tradition to ideas from various traditions is reflected in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the work of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhi. In Sri Aurobindo's Integral Psychology we see a superb blending of the paths of *jñāna, bhakti, karma*, and *dhyāna*. And as the living tradition of spirituality continues to flourish we witness innovation in techniques as in the case of Marharishi Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation. All this is part of Indian psychology.

Chapter 7
Applied Indian Psychology

Indian psychology is not mere theory. It is rooted as we noted in a variety of practices prevalent in India for psychic development. Apart from the theoretical implications it has for understanding human nature from a holistic transpersonal perspective, Indian psychology has in its fold numerous applications at both individual and group levels for mental health and psychological well-being. It also has implications for enhancing human potentials and for promoting conflict resolution and peaceful living. The two levels of application, individual and social, are interrelated inasmuch as they are derived from the same principles. In the Indian tradition individual and society are seen as reflexive of each other. In this chapter, we attempt to sketch a general model of applications and discuss some of the distinctive characteristics and implications of Indian psychology for its possible application.

7.1 Indian Model of Applied Psychology

Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali may be seen as a therapeutic manual to help remedy the all-encompassing pain and suffering (*duḥkha*) enveloping human condition. To the discerning person, Patañjali tells us, pain is all there is (Patañjali, 2.15). There is pain even in the things that give us some temporary sensuous enjoyment. Commenting on this *sūtra*, Vyāsa employs the medical model to diagnose the disease and suggest the cure. He refers to the conditions and causes of the disease to be discarded, describes the state of absence of disease, and prescribes the necessary remedies to get rid of the disease.

The disease is the suffering experienced in the mundane (*sāṁsāric*) life of the empirical world. Its cause is the commingling of consciousness (*puruṣa*) with the material world (*prakṛti*) as it manifests in the mind. The commingling of these two disparate entities creates conflicts, conditions the person and controls his thought, passion and action, giving rise to manifest pain and suffering. The goal of the person is to gain freedom from this predicament and relief from the existential anguish. If the cause of human bondage is the conjunction and comingling of

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consciousness (*puruṣa*) and material forms (*prakṛti*), freedom consists in their separation. The means of separation is the yogic insight that would pierce through the veil of *avidyā* that clouds and shrouds the truth. According to Yoga, this is accomplished at two levels. First, it is at the level of controlling the inputs received and processed by the mind. This is the conscious level that deals with *citta vṛttis.* The second is at the level of *saṁskāra*s, which predispose the person to behave in certain ways, often working below threshold of one's awareness.

*Citta vṛtti*s as well as *saṁskāra*s are of two kinds. One kind is helpful and the other is harmful in one's pursuit of overcoming suffering and pain. The two kinds of *vṛtti*s are called *kliṣṭa* and *akliṣṭa vṛtti*s (1.5). *Kliṣṭa vṛttis* hinder the process of control of the mind, whereas *akliṣṭa vṛtti*s are helpful to attenuate the fluctuations of the mind. The *kliṣṭa vṛtti*s are accompanied by one or more of the five *kleśas* that are considered as hindrances that obstruct concentration and control of mental states. The two kinds of *saṁskāra*s are called *vyutthāna* and *nirodha* (Patañjali, 3.9–10). *Vyutthāna-saṁskāras* are the outward focussed subliminal impressions and behavioral dispositions. These are those the yogin needs to suppress and control. *Nirodha-saṁskāras* are the latent tendencies that help to empty the mind, as it were, by silencing it. When the *nirodha-samskāras* dominate and overpower *vyutthāna-saṁskāra*s, the mind is transformed into the *nirodha* mode. Just as the *kliṣṭa* and *akliṣṭa vṛttis* pull the mind in opposite directions at the conscious level, *vyutthāna* and *nirodha-saṁskāras* do the same at the unconscious level. Here we see the play of opposites—one promoting the engagement and the other disengaging the mind from its habitual activities. The yoga practice is aimed at cultivating *akliṣṭa-vṛttis* and *nirodha-sāṁskāra*s, so as to suppress the *kliṣṭa-vṛttis* and *vyutthāna-sāṁskāra*s. That is why we find Patañjali saying that when the mind is disturbed by perverse/improper thoughts, one should cultivate their opposites (Patañjali, 2.33).

The yoga recipe to root out the undesired in the mind is to cultivate their opposites. The goal is to empty the mind by silencing it. Such silencing can be promoted by cultivating certain habits and practices. The most important of all the hurdles in the way of silencing the mind is *avidyā*, which is described in *Yoga Sūtras* as the *kṣetra*, (the field), the ground that breeds all unhealthy mental states. *Avidyā* consists in mistaking the impermanent as permanent, the impure as pure, pain as pleasure and the *anātman* (nonself) as *ātman* (self) (Patañjali, 2.5). The root of all this is the ego, which masquerades as the self (*ātman*). The ego is the polluted well that springs all ills. Desires arise from it, which bind the person to his body, and the insatiable appetites follow. Humans in pursuit of happiness and having the goal of overcoming the suffering surrounding them need to control and deconstruct the ego. This essentially involves gaining control over the mind, which consists in none other than silencing/emptying the mind. It is like pumping out all the polluted water and drying up the well, which is emptying the desires engendered by the ego. This eventually leads one to freedom and self-realization. The mind which harbors the ego is the *source* of all suffering. At the same time it is the one that enables us to control and deconstruct the ego. Thus the mind is also the *resource* for redemption and regaining happiness.

We have referred earlier to the Body–Mind–Consciousness Trident model of the person, derived from Indian psychology in general and Yoga in particular. The ubiquitous suffering in the human condition is influenced and perpetuated by the biophysical (body) and the psychological (mind) factors; and can be checked and controlled by the spiritual (consciousness) factors. If the biophysical factors *predispose* and the psychological factors *precipitate* suffering, the spiritual factors tend to *prevent* suffering in human condition. Conversely, spiritual factors predispose the person to be happy and enjoy bliss, psychological factors may precipitate such joy and biophysical factors may prevent the person from enjoying bliss.

Psychology in the Indian tradition aims at (a) liberating the person from the existential constraints, which are seen as sources of human frustrations and consequent suffering, and (b) elevating her to a state of bliss and unconditioned existence through a process of self-realization. It is conceived that it is possible to achieve such liberation by continuous effort to create conflict-free conditions of living and by cultivating necessary psychophysical and spiritual habits conducive for personal growth and transformation. Such effort essentially involves practice of altruism, promotion of common good and control of ego drives and compulsions. The constraints engulfing the person that condemn him to constant suffering include (a) ignorance of one's true nature, (b) mistaking the ego for the true Self, (c) attachment to pleasure, (d) experience of hate and aversion, and (e) overindulgence in life and consequent will to live at all costs. What fuels these hindrances to healthy life is unsteady mind, the control of which is basic to transcending the constraints mentioned above. Such a control calls for practice of mental concentration (*abhyāsa*) and cultivating the habit of nonattachment (*vairāgya*). Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* suggests that cultivation of the opposites of the natural hindrances to happiness one faces is an important way of overcoming them.

The subject matter of Indian psychology, as we noted, is centered around the person. The person, we may recall, is conceived as a unique composite of consciousness, mind, and body. The mind may be seen as having two sides. The two sides together constitute the human psychic system. The psychic system, on the one hand, is the cognitive instrument; and on the other hand it is also the instrument that exercises volition and functions as the empirical self, the agentic center of one's thought and action. The functions of cognitive mind and the agentic self are attributed to this trio, which enable us to acquire knowledge, exercise volition and experience, and express feelings and emotion. As the conative instrument, the psychic system in its interaction with the body and its association with consciousness takes the agentic role. In that role it is seen as constituting the empirical self; and the person becomes the knower (*jñātā*), enjoyer (*bhoktā*), and doer (*kartā*). Here again the influence of the trio—*buddhi*, *ahaṁkāra,* and *manas*— are variously felt because they constitute the psychic system.

In this connection, let us recall the distinction made between *self* as (*ātman*) and self as the empirical in its manifestation as the *jīva*. Italicized, *self* refers to *ātman*, the sentient principle, whereas self (without italics) refers to the *jīva*, the agentic self.

We have referred to *buddhi*, *ahaṁkāra,* and *manas* as the three functional modes that drive the mind and constitute the empirical self of the person. Though the three work together, each of them appear to have a special affinity with the mind in its cognitive role and conative functions and the interface with the body of the person. The prime affinity of the *buddhi* is with the cognitive mind. In that sense it constitutes the center of cognizing functions of the mind. The special role of the *ahaṁkāra* is with generating the unique identity in the form of the empirical self, which is central to the agentic function of the person. The *manas* has a special relationship with the *indriyas* (the senses and the relevant bodily processes) and therefore becomes crucial for the functioning of the body. The ego generated by the *ahaṁkāra* is the clone or outward cloak of the true *self*. As the manifest, outer self, it shrouds the true *self* and makes the person mistake the egoistic self with the true *self*, thus leading to a state of ignorance (*avidyā*). The *manas* reaches out to the world outside through the gateway of the senses, processes the inputs and forwards them to *buddhi* via *ahaṁkāra*. The result is the manifestation of *vṛtti*s in the mind. The mind functions via *buddhi* as the cognitive instrument of the person. The *vṛttis* are formed from the inputs provided by the *manas*, appropriated by *ahaṁkāra* and registered in the *buddhi*. Now, the reflection of consciousness on the *vṛtti* contents of the mind gives the person awareness of the world and herself. The manifest self functions as the agent of the person. It gives the person his/her identity and creates the separation between "I" and the "other" (see Fig. 7.1).

In this context it is necessary to recall that the psychic system with its three constituents—*buddhi*, *ahaṁkāra* and *manas*—and the associated body are the evolutes of *prakṛti*; and as such they comprise of the three primal elements—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* in various proportions. Consequently, their proportionate combination and balance between them become factors relevant to the healthy functioning of the body and the mind. From the perspective of the mind, they give rise to different typologies of the person as we noted—the *sāttvic*, the *rājasic,* and the *tāmasic*. From the perspective of the body and physical constitution, there are three factors, *vāta*, *pitta*, and *kapha* as presupposed in Ayurvedic medicine that need to be taken into account in addressing the imbalances—psychological as well as biological—that contribute to the behavioral instability and the disturbed physical and mental health conditions of the person.

Psychological pathologies may be seen as occurring (a) because of the disturbances in the mind/psychic system caused by imbalances, (b) lack of coordination between them, (c) failure in integrating the knower–doer–enjoyer aspects of the self, or (d) problems of interface between mind and consciousness. In this view, psychological pathologies are, on the one hand, a consequence of physically disturbed body/mind, or born out of the instability of the imbalanced self. On the other hand, the problems of interface between mind and consciousness may cause psychic dysfunction. In the physically disturbed mind, there arises dissonance between thought, action, and feelings giving rise to conflict, which leads to different degrees of disturbances and eventual disintegration of the self. Hereby "self" we mean the

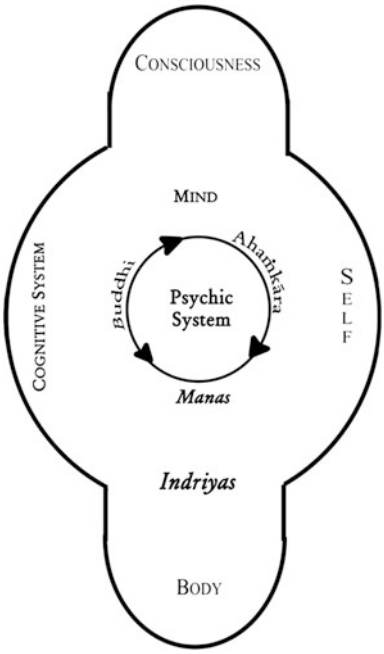


Fig. 7.1 Model of the person

empirical self or the surface/outer self, as we would like to call it, as distinguished from the transcendental or the subliminal, spiritual *self*. The empirical self is what Neisser (1988) called the ecological self. Tart (1993) gave it another name—Mind Embodied (ME). The central point here is that whereas the surface self reflects the mind–body nexus, the mind and the psychic system in their association with consciousness as-such give us the reflections of the spiritual/transcendental *self*. Disturbances in the mind–body nexus give rise to one kind of problems; and difficulties in the interface between mind and consciousness, i.e., the inability of the mind to appropriately reflect consciousness, result in a different set of problems. These may be seen as two levels of psychophysical and psychospiritual ailments.

In the empirical world and the *sāṁsāric* condition of life, there are, according to the Hindu as well as the Buddhist traditions, built in conditions that cause conflicts. Therefore, it is suggested that we cultivate habits and practice a lifestyle that minimize the occurrence of such conflicts, help us gain right knowledge and engage in righteous/virtuous action. The prime source of conflicts in the person, as we pointed out earlier, rests in her dual nature. She has in her an element of the divine/spiritual as well as the imprint of the devil/brute. The divine, is what is truly human, realization of which is the ultimate endeavor of the person. The devil refers to the animal instincts of the body driven by the ego and selfishness. The divine drives us to seek the truth, to be altruistic and to strive for common good. The devil

lures us into being selfish and leads us to succumb to the temptations of life—the so-called natural appetites. There is a constant struggle between these two tendencies leading the person in opposite directions. Human endeavor is to check and stop this tendency. The goal is self-realization, which is to drive the devil out and experience the divine within, i.e., overcome the selfish urges of the brute and embrace the spiritual aspirations and altruism. It may be described as humanizing the human condition by de-demonizing it. Such humanization brings out personal transformations that make ordinary men extraordinary and enable them to experience higher states of being.

When pathologies do manifest, there are varieties of ways by which they could be addressed. Indian psychology is predominantly psychology of growth and transformation. It is less focussed on fixing the disturbed mind and the disintegrated self than developing a healthy mind and integrated self. It is more concerned with learning how the person may be led on a path of freedom from existential constraints and toward perfection in thought, passion, and action. Perfection in thought involves realizing truth. Perfection in feeling consists in experiencing bliss. Perfection in action leads to selfless action and righteous discharge of one's duties (*dharma*) for common good. In the Indian tradition, psychology in its applied format is the study of all and not merely study of the sick and the crippled. It is psychology for personal growth and social transformation for common good.

It is clear that Indian psychology as mentioned is not a value-neutral science. Rather it is a value-loaded discipline. Indeed from the Indian perspective, values are at the very base of human behavior and its eventual outcome. The overarching goal is to realize the divine within which is none other than realizing one's true self. Realizing true self consists in accessing consciousness as-such by the mind, dissociating itself from the constraints imposed by its embodiment. Such self-realization is not merely accompanied by positive mental health, tranquility, peace and freedom, it also results in significant enhancement of human potentials. Thus, as applied psychology, Indian psychology suggests ways to

1. Create conflict-free conditions, conducive to mental health and hygiene that help prevent pathologies of the mind and the self,
2. Aid in fixing the broken psychophysical system in the person,
3. Enhance one's cognitive and other potentials,
4. Enable the person to achieve self-realization and become truly human, and
5. Help bring about societal transformation for common good.

Self-realization is the goal; and the self-realized person is the ideal person. She is the one who practices what she knows as truth. There is no conflict in her between thought, passion and action, between cognition, feeling and conduct. Instead there is harmony between them. This is something that can be cultivated. However, what is more important is that such cultivation (*abhyāsa*) is anchored in adherence to the primary value of altruism. Altruism involves selflessness, detachment, and above all love and compassion for others. Self-realized person needs not be a recluse. If there is any renunciation in her part, it is renunciation of selfishness and her indifference

to fruits of action rather than to action itself. The above model adapted from K. R. Rao's Trident Model of the Person (Rao 2011b) has several significant implications and applications for psychology, which in some respects contrast sharply with the Western notions. Its application, however, is not specific to India; it extends equally to all traditions which share the assumption that there is more to humans than their apparent greed, selfishness and animal nature, and that humans are intrinsically altruistic beings.

7.2 Implications

In the prevailing Western scientific tradition, it is the body which is primary and possibly the only factor to be considered in relation to health and illness of the person. The more liberal and less prevalent model of mental health is incorporated in the so-called mind–body medicine in the West, where a functional distinction between mind and body is made and their reciprocal influence is accepted. In the Indian model to which we have referred in this book, the relationship is three-way involving consciousness, mind, and body. It is their proper functioning and their mutual relationship and the harmony between them that are behind one's health and psychological well-being.

As we noted previously, consciousness and the mind are conflated in the Western tradition. Intentionality is considered as the defining characteristic of consciousness. Consequently, the possibility of the existence of pure conscious states, that is, consciousness without sensory content, is pre-empted. Consciousness is either denied or reduced to processes in the brain. Alternatively, we are left with a completely unbridgeable chasm between mind and body as in radical dualism. Indian psychology postulates the existence of pure consciousness and the possibility of experiencing pure states of consciousness in human condition. Further, it provides for personal transformation and unfolding of hidden human potentials in virtue of mind's interface with consciousness.

In the Western tradition, as typically represented by psychoanalysis, the basic human drives are lust and aggression. If one manifests love and empathy, they are the sublimated outcomes of basic selfish and aggressive urges. In the Indian tradition, the reverse is the case. It is love, compassion, and altruism that are primary and fundamental, though not apparent on the surface, characteristics of humans; because they are spiritual at the core. The ego-driven pleasure and violence are outward attributes of the human being arising from one's animal instincts which are truly extraneous to the real *self*. This indeed is a radical difference in the conception of human nature between the Western and Indian perspectives.

This difference between Indian and Western perspectives is a consequence of the recognition of spiritual factor in the Indian tradition, in addition to the biosocial perspective of the Western scientific tradition. Further, in Indian psychology the boundaries of one's self as we have noted, extend, beyond the person to include others. This blunts the distinction between I and the other and enables the person to

become altruistic and to manifest empathy and love for all, including those who seem at the moment to be in an adversorial position.

No less significant is the difference between the Indian and Western approaches is the relative emphasis placed on healing the impaired system on the one hand and on building a robust and healthy system on the other. In Western psychology, the overwhelming concern has been to detect behavioral deviance and disturbance and fix it wherever possible. In a sense, this is a negative approach. In Indian psychology, the primary concern is more positive and involves helping the person to understand the existential causes of suffering and help her to overcome them. It would appear that the Western concerns are more person-specific and ailment-centered, whereas in Indian psychology the issues are more general and addressed in a holistic way.

In Western psychology, the norm is the average, which means that what is existentially given is taken as the norm and regarded as a standard health and ability indicator. When that standard is not met and there is a deviation, a problem is noticed and attempts are made to address it. In Indian psychology, however, the average itself is a problem. It is assumed that the general existential situation itself is problem-ridden and prone to suffering. Therefore, the goal of Indian psychology is to solve this basic problem of ubiquitous suffering. The remedy is building the person up so that she would rise above the tides and turbulence of existential conditions and constraints to reach a state of tranquility, peace, and happiness. Thus, transformation of the person to a state of being that transcends the existential traps and limitations is an important goal of psychological application in Indian tradition.

It follows from the above that human wellness is not merely meeting the average norm. Rather it is a continuous striving and pursuit for perfection in thought, action, and happiness. Further, the goal is not as much prolonging the longevity and preserving physical health as it is promoting happy and useful life of the person. The former is useful to the extent it is an aid to the latter.

What is happiness (*sukha*)? What constitutes usefulness (*hitāyu*)? According, to the eminent classical Āyurvedic physician, Caraka, *sukha* (happiness) is a state without physical and psychical ailments, where a person has energy and strength to perform his duties, and knowledge to know what is right and wrong, is able to use his senses and enjoy from them, and is virtuous (*Caraka Saṁhitā*, 1.30.23; see Caraka 1996). Useful life (*hitāyu*) is one where the person attends to well-being of others, controls his passions, shares his knowledge and wealth with others and is virtuous (ibid., 1.30.26).

The above conception of human nature has important implications at the personal and social levels. It has equally important methodological implications for psychological research. At the methodological level, behavioral methods that depend essentially on third-person observations are necessary but insufficient to understand human functioning. They are necessary because human beings have physical bodies. In some ways we are biophysical instruments. This aspect of humans is best studied by so-called objective methods that involve third-person observations and intersubject verifiability. At the same time, we have minds. Direct accessibility to the mind is via introspective, first-person exploration. Behavioral

methods involving third-person observations are clearly inadequate at this level of mental functioning. Further, the consciousness aspect of human nature is not only inaccessible to third-person observation, but it is also not amenable to introspective probing because it is transcognitive. It requires other methods for its study. They may be best described as *experiential* as distinguished from the *behavioral* and *introspective* methods.

7.2.1 Implications for Human Development

As we noted, human beings are animal like; but they also contain a streak of divine in them. The latter is more intrinsic and human even if less obvious. The divine is the spiritual. To be spiritual is to be altruistic. For man to be altruistic is to see one self in others and others in himself. The goal of the person is self-realization, which is none other than realizing the core *self* that is common to all. This would mean seeing oneself in others and others in herself, sharing common identity. This is the essence of altruism.

Being instinctively brute, man has natural attraction to sensory gratification and selfish desires and attachment. Being inherently divine, he aspires for self-realization. The person is therefore pulled in two opposite directions—downward by the animal instincts and upward by the divine urge to know truth and live truthfully. The battle between the two is waged relentlessly throughout one's life, whether or not recognized as such. Realization of truth in one's being and experiencing bliss in one's life relate to the upward movement toward self-realization. Seeking pleasure, satisfying the instinctive appetites, is the downward slide prompted by one's animal origin.

The struggle to climb up the ladder to the divine involves accessing consciousness as-such, which has two aspects—knowing truth and realizing it in one's being. This is a continuous process and may not stop until man becomes perfect. The main obstacle to the divine ascent is the ego. The ego is generally the attentional focus that renders the animal appetites attractive and instinctual attachment desirable. Therefore, the control of the ego is the key for opening the doors of the divine. One's personal identity is the hurdle that isolates the person from others and renders him less altruistic. Therefore, one must overcome the ego with determination and by cultivating the sense of detachment. In this effort we need to expand the center of focus from 'I' and 'me' to include all. The divine is what binds one to others. It is what makes one to find common identity with fellow beings.

There are thus two streaks within each of us—the human and the animal. The human is at the core and the animal at the periphery of one's being. The animal is instinctual; and the human is to be cultivated for its unfolding in one's life. Man's pursuit is one of cultivating the human and controlling the animal instincts for self-realization. The true self is one's human side, which is the same in all. Consequently, the distinctions/discriminations we make among people on the basis of caste, color, creed, etc., are untenable in the final analysis. Equally unacceptable are any kind of

exploitation of others for personal benefit, violence as a means of conflict resolution, and claims of superiority of one kind or another. Altruism is the sine quanon of the spiritual in humans.

From the above, we note that human development is a dialectical process; and man's behavior is a function of two opposing forces acting in the human condition. They are the devilish impulses and divine aspirations—the brute and the human. The existential condition constitutes a dialectical situation, where two forces are acting in opposition to each other. The divine (human) and the devil (brute) within each of us are the basic structures of thesis and antithesis. The person at any given time is a synthesis of the two. Their dialectical function may be taken as the explanatory, psychological model of human development. We will discuss more of this in Chap. 10 on Gandhi.

The synthesis of the opposites is not predetermined, following a mechanically set course, as the Marxist theory would have. Rather it is flexible. Humans enjoy freedom to choose the course of development, which can be constructively and creatively driven to ascend on the ladder of self-realization rather than slip into the abyss of instinctive animal urges.

Human development may be viewed thus as resulting from an antinomy of the two opposing tendencies in each of us. The antinomy requires a resolution in a broader relation that synthesizes the opposing tendencies. The brute and the human are the two causal structures that profoundly transform the person for better or worse. The transformation is neither predetermined nor mechanically driven. It is a function of one's effort and is guided by his volition and past actions. It is something that can be cultivated. Indian psychology has much to offer by pointing the logistics of the endeavor to conquer the brute and cultivate the human/divine within. Mahatma Gandhi is one of those who conducted lifelong experiments in pursuit of this. He developed important instruments to aid such pursuit. For Gandhi, nonviolence is the infallible instrument that should guide one's conduct for a consummate synthesis of the conflict between the brute and the human in the process of development. In Gandhi, pursuit of truth and practice of nonviolence become the twin principles that should govern human development for reaching the goal of self-realization. We will discuss more of this in Chap 10.

7.2.2 Pedagogic Implications

Education in the Indian tradition involves more than accessing information and training in certain skills. Education is an exercise for personal transformation. It enables one (a) to acquire knowledge and (b) to make use of it for personal and social growth and transformation. From the perspective of Indian psychology, as we noted previously, information/knowledge is processed at three different levels—brain, mind, and consciousness. At the level of the brain, sensory processes are involved in generating and accessing information. We have thus observational awareness. Then, understanding of it comes from ratiocination. This requires the

functioning of the mind. In the Indian pedagogy, there is another level of learning. It is internalization of what is learned. It involves realization of knowledge that goes beyond awareness and understanding. Realization consists in incorporating knowledge into one's being. In the case of realization, thought, and action go together; and cognition and conduct blend into each other.

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (IV.56), as mentioned earlier in Chap. 6, speaks of these three levels as *śravaṇa*, *manana,* and *nididhyāsana. Śravaṇa* in its broad sense may be interpreted as observational knowing. *Manana* is rational understanding. *Nididhyāsana* is meditative realization of truth. At the level of *nididhyāsana*, knowing and being become one without any dissociation between them. It is said, "to know Brahman is to be Brahman." *Gītā* also has a similar tripartite division in *praṇipāta* (surrender), *paripraśna* (inquiry), and *sevā* (sevice) (IV.34). Surrender is akin to awareness, taking truthfully what is given (in the context of the *Gītā*, what is given by the realized teacher—Kṛṣṇa). Inquiry involves questioning what is given. Finally, *sevā* is doing in accordance with the knowledge received and wisdom gained by awareness and inquiry. Thus, education in the Indian tradition (a) informs the person, (b) encourages him to critically evaluate it, and (c) prepares him to act in accordance with that knowledge. The three pedagogic levels are (1) received knowledge (2) wisdom backed by inquiry and reason, and (3) action in accordance with tested knowledge, wisdom. It is interesting that the *Gītā* considers service as a form of meditation and therefore an act of realization.

The notion of *nididhyāsana* has important methodological and pedagogical implications, in addition to *self-realization*. Realization involves intrinsic authenticity, first-person validation, and self-certification of truth as distinct from external validation and so-called objective verification. Indian psychology successfully overcomes the "explanatory gap," the divide between first-person subjectivity and third-person objectivity, in the concept of *nididhyāsana* and meditative realization of truth.

The pedagogic implications of *nididhyāsana* take education beyond learning by observation and reflection. Education should also give the necessary disposition to act in accordance with what one considers as truth. In the existential context, we may keep in perspective, knowing truth and acting truthfully are two different things. In the Indian tradition, education is not merely a truth-seeking and communicating endeavor. It is also a mission to prepare one to live and act truthfully.

One of the significant values the classical system of Indian education hopes to promote is self-discovery. Paranjpe (2010) called attention to the significant difference between Western notion of self-actualization and the Indian concept of self-realization as the goal of education. Education to be true education should be a tool to help human development. The dominant ideal of human development in Western tradition from Aristotle through Abraham Maslow and Erik Erikson is self-actualization, which involves continuous unfolding of hidden potentials. It is a relentless pursuit to increasingly satisfy images of who one might become in future. This notion is not without its problem, as Erikson himself came to recognize. The ever-changing image of the self leaves open the possibility that one may discover at the end that the self-identity he has come to have is the wrong one.

Contrasting the Western notion of self-actualization with self-realization in Indian psychology, Paranjpe points out that the latter overcomes Erikson's difficulty of cultivating the ideal self. It is precisely this kind of an existential concern that the Upaniṣadic tradition has addressed, as Paranjpe points out. The current system of education in India seems to have forgotten the Upaniṣadic legacy. It is modeled after the Euro-American system that has implicitly followed the Aristotelian model of self-actualisation. We train students mostly to practice a vocation or a profession so as to enable them to lead a life of wealth and prosperity. There is nothing wrong in enabling one to lead such a life. Seen form a traditional Indian point of view, this implies assisting the pursuit of *artha* and *kāma*, or the attainment of *abhyudaya*, meaning prosperity. The Indian tradition, however, suggests in addition *niḥśreyasa*, or the highest good involving all, as a twin goal of life along with personal prosperity.

The highest good is said to be attained through the discovery of the true Self, or the unchanging principle behind the multiplicity of continually changing self-images. Such a discovery would make it unnecessary to invent a newer, better self in search of greater satisfaction. The center of life would be no longer the ego that puffs up with successes and deflates with reverses in life; the ubiquitous lure of perpetual progress would disappear; and an unending inner calm would prevail if and when the true Self is realized. Such *self-realization* is attained in a distinctive state of consciousness different from the commonly experienced states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. It is variously called, *turīyā* or fourth state, *samādhi,* and so on.

7.2.3 Therapeutic Implications

In the Indian tradition, one of the prime characteristics of being human is that we are conscious subjects. Being conscious is not merely a quality of awareness. It is the accessibility to a fundamental principle. It is variously described as 'soul,' '*self,*' 'consciousness as-such.' Sri Aurobindo called it the 'psychic being.' In Western psychology—especially in its applied therapeutic aspects—the ego occupies the center stage, taking the place of consciousness. It is the functioning of the ego that is of primary concern. Understanding the problems of adjustment of the ego, and dysfunctions of the ego caused by factors such as chemical imbalances, childhood trauma, or problems of sex, has been the saga of much of Western clinical psychology and psychotherapeutic practices.

The ego in the Indian psychological tradition, as we have discussed in different contexts, is a manifestation of the mind and not of consciousness. It masks the true *self*. The ego shrouded by ignorance masquerades as the self. Therefore, removing the veil of ignorance, taming the ego, transcending the limiting adjuncts of the mind to allow the true light of consciousness to reflect on the mind of the person become the focus of Indian psychology. This is what is involved in the process of transformation of the person. Yoga, as we noted, is a method of training for such

transformation. According to Sri Aurobindo, there are three intrapsychic processes involved in ego-transformation. They are aspiration, surrender and rejection. *Aspiration* is the motivating factor. It is the driving force to feel the presence of the divine spirit. If we equate the spirit with consciousness as-such, aspiration is the desire to access consciousness as-such. *Surrender* refers to the openness to witness consciousness as-such with no prior notions, attitudes and expectations. *Rejection* involves rejection of all those ego accretions that cloud consciousness as-such, so as to allow the unencumbered play of the psychic being. The function of the psychic being is thus accessing consciousness as-such and help guide and transform both individual and collective life (Aurobindo 1992).

In Western psychology we find more attention paid to ego-adjustment than ego-transformation. Therefore, the discussions often revolve around defense mechanisms. Vaillant (1993) in *The Wisdom of the Ego* provides an interesting classification of the varieties of defense mechanisms and styles of functioning, ranging from psychotic delusions to mature altruism and humor. All these styles, whether normal or aberrational, are attempts at adjustment and not transformation of the ego. Transformation does something different. It involves tracing the route back to existential suffering. By controlling craving and attachment, one transcends the limiting adjuncts of the mind. Consequently the clouds of ignorance hovering around the person are dispelled and the person experiences states of pure consciousness. Such transformational experiences are the gateway to self-realization, which is none other than the discovery of the true *self* within. It is the joy of the *self* and not the pleasures of the *ego* that the transformed person experiences. The general psychotherapeutic approach in the current Western mainstream tradition is horizontal, traveling across the existential contours of the ego. The Indian perspective is vertical, elevating the person from the tangled ego to the sublime heights of the *self*, which results in experiencing states of pure consciousness. Achieving a state of pure consciousness has healing and transformational consequences to the person in such a state.

7.2.4 Exploring Extraordinary Human Experience

Extrasensory phenomena such as telepathy and the direct action of mind over matter, which is called psychokinesis (PK), pose severe explanatory challenges within the Western paradigm of science. These are events that cannot simply occur in the physical universe as we know it. Broad (1953) labeled them "basic limiting principles," which rule out the possibility of mind-to-mind communication that does not involve meaningful transfer of energy between minds. Similarly non-inferential precognition becomes an absurdity. All attempts to naturalize the supernatural—that is what parapsychology hopes to do—result in the paradox of demolishing the very assumptive base of science by science itself. The attempts to find a naturalistic explanation of extrasensory perception (ESP), which is the ability to communicate

without any sensory channel, and PK (mind over matter) have not been successful. These include observational theories based on quantum mechanics (Irwin 1999).

It would seem that research into ESP and such other so-called anomalies is unlikely to make much headway if the research continues to employ the disjunctive Western conceptual categories. The most that could be established within the Western paradigm is to provide extensive and even compelling evidence for the existence of cognitive anomalies. Beyond this, it is unlikely that any significant insights into the nature of extrasensory phenomena themselves could be gained by methods that basically assume their nonexistence (for a more detailed discussion of these issues see *Cognitive Anomalies*, *Consciousness and Yoga*, Rao 2011b).

The situation is very different in the Indian tradition. In Indian psychology, for example, there are concepts, methods, and models that could make a difference. In the classical Indian tradition, no sharp distinction is made between the natural and the supernatural, the scientific and the spiritual. At some level of awareness, even the subject–object dichotomy disappears. Consequently, neither the paradox of naturalizing the supernormal nor the perplexities of parapsychological research pose any serious threat for exploring and understanding the extraordinary human experience currently considered anomalous.

Related in some ways to parapsychological phenomena are studies in the area of epidemiology of religion and clinical studies of the effects of religious beliefs on health and healing in general (Koenig et al. 2001) and the healing effects of intercessory prayer in particular. These studies have shown that religious beliefs and practice such as prayer seem to have beneficial effects on health and healing. In the case of the health effects of remote intercessory prayer it would seem that these effects may indeed involve paranormal phenomena like ESP and PK. Intercessory prayer involves praying for others' benefit. In some of these studies, the patients did not even know that someone was praying for them. Yet, their condition seemed to have improved compared to the controlled group of patients who did not have the benefit of someone praying for them. Rao (2011b) reviewed these researches and their implications to Indian psychology. While these studies are controversial like parapsychology in general and for similar reasons, the evidence is more than suggestive that prayer appears to help people even when the patient is not aware that someone is praying for them. These results which make little sense in the context of current psychological knowledge fit quite well with the conception of human nature in Indian psychology.

7.3 Applications

7.3.1 Mental Health and Hygiene: Prevention of Illness

In the Indian tradition, health is more than absence of illness; it refers to a positive lifestyle that allows for optimal achievement and happiness. Basically, at one level, it consists, as mentioned earlier, in the coordination of and harmony between

manas, *ahaṁkāra,* and *buddhi* which make up the mind and are reflected in the manifest (surface) self. Again, being the evolutes of *prakṛti*, the three constituents of the mind are comprised of three *guṇa*s—*sattva*, *rajas,* and *tamas*. Consequently, the balance existing between the *guṇa*s in a given situation is an indicator of their healthy functioning. At another level, it is the harmony between consciousness, mind, and the body of the person that is involved in healthy functioning of a person. A lack of appropriate coordination between mind and body would create a situation where reflections of consciousness get distorted leading to all kinds of thought disorders. Thus harmonious functioning of *manas*, *ahaṁkāra*, and *buddhi* on the one hand and the proper balance between their *sattva*, *rajas,* and *tamas* components on the other are prerequisites for psychosomatic balance which is considered the key ingredient for health and wellness.

Psychosomatic balance leads to a stable mind. Stable mind is requisite for a peaceful and stress-free life. It is possible to cultivate a stable mind by cultivating certain habits. At the level of *buddhi*, the base of one's intellectual abilities, it is detachment and freedom from all kinds of biases that need to be cultivated so that things are perceived and truth manifests in a less distorted way, which is necessary for optimal functioning of the person. As mentioned at the outset, cultivation of *nirodha saṁskāra*s helps in this connection. At the level of *ahaṁkāra*, it is the observance and adherence to ethical way of life that one needs to cultivate. Failure to firmly anchor *ahaṁkāra* to an ethical code of conduct will lead to an unbridled ego that drives the person on the path of conflict. The *manas* needs among other things sleep, rest, appropriate diet, and above all attentional focus so that the mind receives the right inputs. Here the cultivation of *akliṣṭa vṛtti*s is recommended. In order to have a healthy mind one needs to cultivate detachment, altruism and attentional control. In the Indian tradition, we find a variety of practices designed to achieve this. *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga* is one of those. Among the eight steps in Patañjali's Rāja yoga, *yama* and *niyama* are the ethical practices that are intended to control the ego, a product of *ahaṁkāra*, and its manifest action; *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* to keep the body healthy; and *pratyāhāra* to gain a measure of control over sensory inputs as a preparation for voluntary control of attention. The last three, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* are the exercises that help gain control of the mind, which is the essence of a psychologically healthy person.

Again, we find in Āyurveda, the classical system of Indian medicine, a set of rules of conduct that help to maintain a healthy state of mind. Caraka in his *Saṁhitā* includes among the rules of conduct (a) 'do good and avoid harm to others,' (b) 'see your happiness in the happiness of others,' (c) 'have control over your needs and lead a disciplined life,' (d) 'be detached in your actions,' (e) 'keep your mind focussed and balanced,' and (f) 'control the wavering and fluctuations of the mind' (Kapoor 2014). We may readily see that these rules essentially follow the rationale behind *aṣṭāṅga yoga* as mentioned above. Cultivation of right habits of mind (*sadvṛtti*s) is the recommended recipe for mental health. These are described in different contexts by medical writers like Caraka and are contained in classical psychological texts like *Yoga Sūtras* and the religious texts like *Bhagavad Gītā*.

In *Yoga Sūtras*, Patañjāli suggests practice of fourfold exercises to help the practitioner to keep the mind clear and undistracted (Patañjali, 1.33). As Vyāsa explains, one needs to "cultivate friendliness to all living beings that have reached the experience of happiness; compassion toward those in pain; joy toward those whose character is meritorious; indifference toward those whose character is demeritorious" (see Woods 1914). The above observances enable the mind to be calm, focused, steady and stable. It is gaining control over the mind that is considered crucial for maintaining mental health. It is what leads the person away from suffering to a state of happiness.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* also recommends the same recipe as suggested in Yoga. Kṛṣṇa counsels the confused and troubled Arjuna in the Kurukshetra battle to follow the path of Yoga and goes on interpreting the basics of Yoga to Arjuna's benefit. First, there is need for one-point concentration (2.41). Second, one must overcome the pull of opposites, the force of three *guṇas*, and greed and desire to accumulate, and thus become calm (2.45). Third, pay attention to action and not dwell on the fruits of action (2.47), which calls for actions without attachment, and being indifferent to the outcome (2.48). Fourth, cultivate wisdom and be guided by it (2.49–51). The above practices lead the person toward self-realization. The self-realized person is one with steady and steadfast mind, described as *sthitaprajña*, the one settled in deep wisdom.

What are the characteristics of the person settled in such deep wisdom, the *sthitaprajña?* Kṛṣṇa describes them to Arjuna in some detail (2.55–72). Essentially, *sthitaprajña* is a person with full self-control. In the process of explaining these characteristics, Kṛṣṇa describes the causes of unsteadiness of the mind and its crippling aspects that need to be overcome. "Brooding on sense objects causes attachment to them. Attachment breeds craving; craving breeds anger. Anger breeds delusion; delusion leads to loss of memory (of the self). Loss of right memory causes decay of the discriminating faculty. From decay of discrimination, annihilation (of spiritual life) follows" (2.62–63; see Yogananda 1995). Further, the *Gītā* tells us that the person, who gives up all desires, does not crave; he relinquishes ego identity and the sense of "mineness" and realizes peace within (2.71). All this shows that the self-realized *sthitaprajña* is a totally altruistic person. Cultivation of altruism is an important way of preserving and promoting mental health.

Now, the state of *sthitaprajña* and practice of complete altruism are ideals and goals one should seek. However, such an ideal may be unreachable in any absolute sense. Therefore, they need to be contextualized and made real by actualization in a given situation. That is what Kṛṣṇa does when he makes Arjuna realize his duty and move forward in the battle instead of paralyzed in that conflict situation. Kṛṣṇa was an ideal psychotherapist. Indian psychology has here a model that could be put into practice. In fact, not only a number of folk therapies exist in Indian mythology but a variety of them are also prevalent in the vast rural landscape of India. Kakar (1982) provides an excellent and informative rendering of them in his *Shamans*, *Mystics, and Doctors*. More recently, Dalal (2011) discussed the relevance of the folk practices to psychotherapy and the possibility that they could "provide insights that

can be used to evolve more relevant psychotherapies" (p. 34). Paranjpe (2014) did a case study of healing and counseling practices of a *guru* in a spiritual setting.

7.3.2 Cure: Servicing the System

The psychophysical system may be broken at the level of the body or the mind/self. Bodily dysfunctions lead to problems of adjustment and the system tends to breakdown. Breakdown involves lack of harmony in the system. Lack of harmony has different levels. It may arise between the different aspects of the psychic system or between the constituents of the physical system or in the proper coordination between physical and psychic systems. Any manifest imbalances precipitate dysfunctional behavior and cause a variety of functional disorders. Inasmuch as the relationship between the body and the psyche is reciprocal, not only do the problems with the physical system lead to psychological problems, but psychological dysfunctions may also lead to physical ailments.

In the Indian tradition, the approach to service the system in need of repair is holistic and not analytical. Therefore, it is the harmony between the different aspects of the psyche as also the different functions of the body that are relevant for therapy. For this reason, we find medical texts like *Caraka Saṁhitā* discuss psychological principles and psychological texts like *Yoga Sūtras* refer to physical practices of *āsana*s and *prāṇāyāma.* As mentioned, any breakdown of harmony within the physical and psychic systems or between them has the potential for illness. Harmony and balance are the essential ingredients in successful human functioning. Echoing this principle of balance and harmony Sri Aurobindo writes:

> [A]ll problems of existence are essentially problems of harmony. They arise from the perception of an unsolved discord and the instinct of an undiscovered agreement or unity. To rest content with unsolved discord is possible for the practical and more animal part of man, but impossible for his fully awakened mind, and usually even his practical parts only escape from the general necessity either by shutting out the problem or by accepting a rough, utilitarian and unillumined compromise. (2005, p. 4)

A number of psychiatrists familiar with the tenets of Indian psychology and largely influenced by the writings of people like Sri Aurobindo have referred to the potential relevance of Indian psychology to psychotherapeutic practices. Included among them are the American psychiatrist Miovic (2008, 2011) and the Indian physician Pandey (2011).

In an insightful and scholarly review of the various points of interaction between Indian psychology and current psychotherapeutic practices, Miovic (2008) concludes: "Indian psychology can expand the conceptual framework of psychotherapy by providing a consciousness perspective that allows for a variety of spiritual experiences to be seen as progressive and healthy. Indian yoga also provides various approaches to consciousness training … that can enhance mental and emotional well-being outside of therapy and can help both clients and therapists grow

within the setting of psychotherapy" (p. 466). Several interesting things emerge from the review of Miovic. First, Indian psychology has much to offer in the training of the therapist to actualize several of the therapeutic goals in the psychoanalytic and psychodynamic practices. Second, Indian psychology has a mine of native practices that could be selectively excavated and creatively carved and applied to bring about desired behavior modifications.

Miovic writes about moving beyond routine neutrality to cultivating "witness consciousness" not only to reinforce the neutral stance but also to obtain "background awareness from which to conduct psychodynamic therapy" (2008, p. 458). Further, as Miovic recognizes, counter-transference may also be used to "read" the client's subconscious. This could be a big help in reaching out to the client. Also, it is long recognized that the "affective interpersonal skills," the therapist's emotional state, and the quality of client–therapist relationship have much impact on the therapeutic success. Therefore, as Miovic points out, that everything the clinicians could do to cultivate their own consciousness and of the client would have salutary impact on successful therapy.

Miovic also draws attention to significant inputs from Indian psychology to augment cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which is currently prevalent as psychodynamic therapy in the West. Pointing out that the Buddha "is arguably the most brilliant cognitive behavioral therapist the world has ever known," Miovic writes that the "Buddha's eightfold path of enlightenment is a masterpiece of existential CBT that aims to dissolve the illusion of permanence that sustains ego-centric awareness and thus perpetuates all forms of psychological suffering" (2008, p. 463). Further, Miovic refers to several studies that show (a) mindfulness practice in combination with CBT tends to help in successfully treating obsessive–compulsive disorder, (b) practice of *āsana*s, *prāṇāyāma* and attendant lifestyle modifications help to reduce anxiety symptoms and enable cognitive restructuring and behavior modification, and (c), meditation brings about significant neuropsychological changes relevant to CBT. We will review in the next chapter in some detail psychological research in the area of meditation, which is inspired by Indian psychological thought and practices.

"Transference" and "counter-transference" are two important concepts in psychoanalysis and other psychodynamic therapies. Transference refers to "unconscious and automatic reactions" of the client toward the therapist. It involves client's projection of emotional attachment figures of the past on to the present therapist. These emotions may be pleasant or painful. Counter-transference refers to the reactions of the therapist to the client. They may be conscious or unconscious, positive or negative. From the Freudian perspective counter-transference is a distraction and an impediment to be avoided in the goal of the therapist to be objective. However, there is significant evidence to suggest that counter-transference does occur frequently in client–therapist relationships. Therefore, it would be well to make use of counter-transference to reinforce successful therapy if the counter-transference is of the kind that would help rather than hurt the client.

It is generally agreed that the therapist should maintain equanimity of mind, be objective, neutral, and unbiased. He needs to develop a mindset of detachment and

yet have empathy toward the client. In the current scenario, the therapist strives to achieve neutrality and unbiased relationship with the client; but there are no systematic procedures to develop such a mindset. It is in this connection, Indian psychology has much to offer in the training of a psychotherapist not only in objective neutrality but also in facilitating positive counter-transference.

In the Indian psychological tradition, there are several techniques and strategies to have an unbiased mind to be detached and to develop altruistic empathy. These may be incorporated into the basic training of the therapists and the therapist-trainee encouraged to cultivate equanimity, detachment, and altruism in the manner, for example, of a yogin in training. This could add a healthy dimension to the clinical encounter and the client-therapist relationship that would mitigate against the negative effects of counter-transference and at the same time reinforce the client-therapist relationship in a positive way.

In India, there is a widespread belief that in the presence of the person, who has achieved a level of development and has a balanced and stable mind, and is detached and altruistic, others experience significant positive personal transformations. This may be interpreted to mean that positive counter-transference could have a healing effect. In other words, the Indian psychospiritual development techniques judiciously practised by a therapist could have twin effects of negating negative counter-transference and promoting its positive counterpart.

Patañjali states in *Yoga Sūtras* that "on being firmly grounded in nonviolence, there is in his (yogin's) presence giving up of enmity" (2.35, Rao 2011b, p. 607). When the yogin attains a mental state of perfect nonviolence, he becomes a person in whose presence there is no hostility. This implies that the very presence of the yogin who achieved excellence in the practice of nonviolence wards off violence around him. Others in his presence eschew violence and imbibe the spirit of nonviolence and manifest it in their conduct. Thus, a genuine yogin established in nonviolence not only transforms himself, but also others around him.

The above *sūtra* was instrumental for conducting research on practitioners of transcendental meditation (TM) to test whether meditating on peace and nonviolence would help reduce crime and other forms of violence in surrounding areas. In a well controlled study carried out in Washington, D.C. (Hagelin et al. 1999), it is reported that there was indeed a significant drop in violent crime in Washington, DC area and that the size of decrease is correlated with the size of the meditating group. More recently, Paul Ekman, a distinguished American psychologist refers in his book how he was cured from his chronic problem with anger by just spending time in the presence of Dalai Lama (Dalai Lama and Ekman 2008). Such observations as well as studies of the effects of intercessory prayer and the psychokinetic effects on living systems referred to earlier clearly suggest the possibility of positive counter-transference to help heal the patient.

Thus Indian psychology has much to offer in the training and practice of psychotherapists. In fact, there are an increasing number of psychotherapists in the West who are successfully incorporating mindfulness exercises in their practices.

Pandey (2011) has attempted to draw the contours of Indian spiritual thought as found in Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga Psychology and their bearing on

psychotherapy. Pandey points out that the first important element in Indian spiritual thought is "insistence on faith as a key element in life" and that "most crises of life are actually crises of faith" (p. 62). He draws attention to the significant difference between faith and belief. Belief, he says, is outward focussed and relates to external things whereas faith is internal and intrinsic to the person. "It is the psychotherapist's task," writes Pandey, "to patiently extract this intrinsic faith, the inner scripture hidden in every heart. This is the Indian version of cognitive therapy, where a client's mind is approached through her/his soul. To change from within by using client's own faith is therefore the method favored by the therapist" in the Indian tradition (p. 62). To a student trained in science, "faith" would appear as an anti-scientific attitude. In the clinical and spiritual context, however, it is not so. It is a necessary ingredient of a mindset necessary for a steadfast and steady mind which is essential for a psychologically healthy person. It is therefore natural that the importance of faith in one's life is repeatedly emphasized in *Yoga Sūtras*, the *Gītā* and similar texts.

Pandey's emphasis on faith and the therapist's role to "patiently extract it" refers to helping the client focus inward, which in turn reminds us of the notion of *pratyāhāra*, the fifth limb in *aṣṭāṅga yoga. Pratyāhāra* is variously translated; but it essentially means turning attention inward with the intention of becoming aware of the sensory processes so as to gain a measure of control over them. It seems almost akin to biofeedback except that the latter is facilitated by external monitoring of the inner states. In *pratyāhāra*, however, the monitoring itself is self-driven. Patañjāli describes *pratyāhāra* as withdrawal of the senses from their objects (2.54). Withdrawal of the senses may be interpreted in two ways. According to Yoga, the perceptual process consists in the mind taking the form of the objects in its perceptual field. The mind is said to go out to the object via the sensory channels. Consequently, withdrawal of the senses effectively means shutting out the mind from taking the form of the object. *Pratyāhāra* may also be seen as internal focus of the mind restraining and disengaging itself from sensory inputs.

What does *pratyāhāra* accomplish? According to *Yoga Sūtras*, one gains by practice of *pratyāhāra*, complete mastery of the senses (II.55). Vyāsa in his commentary on this *sūtra* refers to four levels of control over the senses. The first level is nonattachment to the sensory pleasures, overcoming sensory indulgence and temptations. The second level involves gaining the ability to regulate sensory contact so that one receives the inputs voluntarily and not automatically. At the third level, there is absence of pain or pleasure associated with perceptual inputs. The fourth level involves fully focussed one-point concentration and complete mastery over sensory functions.

One would assume that the above four are levels of practice and not the effects of practice. Now, the details of how one practices *pratyāhāra* are not stated in *Yoga Sūtras* and are not easily available. One has to depend on a well versed teacher to train one in this discipline. However, some information on the practice of *pratyāhāra* is available in some Upaniṣads and the *Bhagavad Gītā.* For example, *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* interprets it as the experience of the one who moves progressively from *annamaya* to *ānandamaya kośa*.

Tripathi (2011) discussed the concept of *pratyāhāra* and its role in the management of mental health. He outlines several techniques of *pratyāhāra* and three models of its application and describes the ways it could be used as method of behavioral modification for mental health.

7.3.3 Indian Psychology and Positive Psychology

Though the phrase positive psychology appeared first in Abraham Maslow's book (1954) *Motivation and Personality*, its launching as a moment in psychology is no older than twenty-first century. Unlike positive psychology, Indian psychology, as we noted, has its origins in classical Indian thought and the legendary psycho-spiritual practices prevalent in the Indian subcontinent for over two millennia. Positive psychology has registered a phenomenal growth during the past 10 years, replacing in a significant manner humanistic psychology, which prided itself as the third force in psychology. Whereas Indian psychology is rich in its theoretical content, positive psychology is overwhelmingly practice oriented and data-driven with little theoretical binding. Thus positive psychology and Indian psychology are different; yet, as we suggest, they may learn from each other and benefit by close association. The joint appeal of Indian psychology and positive psychology consists to a significant extent in their shared disenchantment with current preoccupations in mainstream psychology and the need for charting a new course for a fuller understanding of human nature.

Positive psychologists like Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi say that the aim of positive psychology is "to catalyze a change in psychology from a preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building the best qualities in life (Seligman 2005, p. 3)." This emphasis away from repair to reconstruction, as we have noted earlier, is something that Indian psychology shares with positive psychology.

As Rao (2014e, f) has argued, Indian psychology and positive psychology have much to learn from each other. Indian psychology is theoretically rich; and positive psychology has the momentum behind it. Indian psychology has the necessary metatheoretical framework to sustain a movement like positive psychology. It could help generate models that would be seen as more than viable and credible alternatives to the prevalent models, which have limited the scope and substance of psychology and are under considerable strain to cope up with challenges of twenty-first century. More interestingly, Indian psychology can also be helpful in providing the necessary theoretical underpinning for many of the concepts that are prominently but loosely used in positive psychology, such as positive emotion, happiness, suffering, flow, subjective well-being, spirituality, wisdom, and so on. Indeed, there is already evidence of significant convergence of thought in important respects between the influential writings in positive psychology and the recent publications in the area of Indian psychology (Rao et al. 2008; Rao 2011b). At the same time, Indian psychology, struggling to find a niche in academic psychology,

may gain by focusing on the points of convergence between it and some of the concrete research findings of positive psychology.

Points of Contact between IP and PP: Martin Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) described positive psychology as "psychology of positive human functions" which helps "to build thriving individuals and communities." It is hoped that positive psychology would seek "to find and nurture genius and creativity" and "to make normal life more fulfilling" (Compton 2005). Positive psychology focuses on positive emotions, positive engagement, positive relationships, positive meaning, and positive accomplishments in pursuit of happiness (Seligman 1990). Its focus is not on dysfunction and illness of individuals but on helping them to "become happier and more fulfilled. In the words of Peterson (2006), positive psychology "is the scientific psychology of what makes life most worth living. It is a call for psychological science and practice to be as concerned with strength as with weakness; as interested in building the best things in life as is repairing the worst; and as concerned with making the lives of normal people fulfilling as with healing pathology." In short, positive psychology seeks to make people happy by making life meaningful.

Those who are familiar with Indian thought readily see the convergence of positive psychology's focus on meaningful life with Indian ethos as depicted in Indian epics and *puranas*. Many texts providing guidelines for proper and meaningful behavior, such as the *Nīti Śataka* of Bhartṛhari, give us pointers for cultivating habits of mind conducive to making life meaningful. Meaningful life in the Indian tradition is altruist and ego-transcending.

Now, it may be seen from the above, how both positive psychology and Indian psychology are value-loaded. However, in positive psychology we are speaking of happiness, good life, fulfilling life, and positive this and positive that. Happiness may mean different things for different people. Similarly what is life ful filling varies enormously among different persons and cultures. Consequently, there is every possibility that positive psychology may be seen as promoting all and sundry practices as justifiable means of promoting happiness, and all kinds of happiness. Several of the writers on positive psychology have already cautioned us that positive psychology may degenerate into such a chaotic, free for all and unsustainable situation.

However, we gather from the research protocols in positive psychology and much of the research reported and the tenor of discussions that what underlies good life is altruism and overcoming mundane selfish cravings. If indeed this is the true implication of positive psychology, we can at once see the close connectedness of Indian psychology with positive psychology. What is vague and unstated in positive psychology becomes explicit and central in Indian psychology. The goal of Indian psychology is the realization of altruism in one's life and practices; and it has the necessary theoretical framework from which the ethic of altruism can be justified in preference to self-directed hedonism and utilitarianism. That this is not lost sight of in positive psychology may be seen in the interest shown by positive psychologists in Yoga, meditation, and Buddhism. Again, for this reason mindfulness is an area of considerable research interest in positive psychology.

We may not, however, overlook the fact that there are significant differences on fundamentals between Indian psychology and positive psychology. They relate to foundational assumptions, epistemological and ontological. At the epistemological level, Indian psychology refers to *parā vidyā,* i.e., knowledge beyond the sensory range, and "nondual" forms of knowledge which do not admit subject–object distinction. It keeps its doors open to transcognitive forms of knowing (Cornelissen 2014). Positive psychology, like mainstream psychology, is basically closed to these modes of knowing and forms of knowledge. At the ontological level, positive psychology appears committed to the Western individualistic view of the self, which is significantly at variance from the collectivist perspective of the self in the Indian tradition (Christopher 2014). As Rao (2014e) pointed out, these differences are real and substantial, but are not sufficient to derail possible mutual reinforcement. Inasmuch as positive psychology has a weak theoretical base, its enrichment involves embracing the wider conception of human nature embedded in Indian psychology.

To sum up, Indian psychology and positive psychology appear to share the disappointment with the current state of affairs in mainstream psychology. They call for new initiatives. Again, there appears to be a significant common ground underling these initiatives. Indian psychology has a strong theoretical base; but it needs greater empirical grounding in current research for its concepts and theories. Positive psychology has begun with a considerable empirical base; but it is weak in theory that could bring the disparate data into a cohesive theoretical framework for sustained and programmatic research. Further, positive psychology should go beyond hedonistic pleasures to define happiness. There is the need to combine material prosperity with moral sensitivity. The emphasis on hedonistic happiness is inconsistent with the true purport of positive psychology. Recent research under the name of "eudaimonia" by positive psychologists is insufficient as the necessary theoretical base beyond utilitarianism or "hedonia." Without an altruistic ethical base, positive psychology is likely to go astray and become irrelevant as a philosophy of positive happiness.

Indian psychology on its part needs strong empirical base to ground its theories and concepts. It is not unreasonable to suppose that greater collaboration between psychologists working in the areas of Indian psychology and positive psychology could possibly lead to more fruitful research. Such collaboration could be mutually reinforcing. Indeed, the challenges are too compelling and the opportunities are too obvious to overlook.

Chapter 8
Meditation and Applied Yoga

Yoga in Sanskrit literally means "yoke" or "union". To yoke is to bring two into close relationship. "Union" obviously refers to the culmination of such relationship. The term "yoga" appears in several Upaniṣads, even though it is most closely associated with Patañjali of the second century BCE, who collected and systematized the yogic traditions and practices that existed at the time. Yoga has since come to represent a method/technique that is believed to enable one to yoke and unite the surface, empirical self, with the universal transcendental self. The transcendental self is considered to be the true self unchanging and genuine, whereas the empirical self is an ever-changing pseudo self driven by the ego.

The method that Patañjali systematically developed and described in *Yoga Sūtras* is known as *dhyāna yoga*. It is believed to help self-realization, which is the realization of one's true self. Other traditionally recognized yogas include *jñāna yoga*, *bhakti yoga,* and *karma yoga*. As mentioned earlier and will be further illustrated in the next chapter, *jñāna yoga* takes the cognitive approach and considers knowledge as crucial. For *bhakti yoga* devotion is central; and *karma yoga* stresses action and ethical conduct as necessary practices of yoga.

The goal of all yogas in Hindu thought appears to be essentially the same, which is to yoke and unite the empirical self with the transcendental self. The central idea embedded in the different kinds of yoga is that in the life of a person, who is in essence an embodiment of transcendental *self*, the manifest self is not the true self. Rather it is an artificial self emerging as a function of the mind; and it masquerades as the self deriving its force from the ego. With the ego in place, the person is driven by it and the impulses it generates, which alienate her from the true *self*. This is the existential condition in which humans find themselves. Their quest then becomes one of finding the true *self*. The greatest impediment in this pursuit is the ego. Therefore, the pursuit of the goal of self-realization consists in controlling the ego and restoring the true *self* to the center of one's being. Thus controlling and eliminating the ego, when possible, without becoming dysfunctional or disembodied is an essential step toward *self-realization*. Different yogas have different procedures to achieve this goal.

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In Patañjali yoga, there are eight steps that help to condition the body, train the mind, and control the ego and thus break through the clouds of ignorance and realize one's true identity with the genuine self, *puruṣa*. This is a method of meditation (*dhyāna*) to gain insightful *self-realization*. Though *dhyāna yoga* of Patañjali has the same goal and similar outcome as *jñāna yoga*, it is in some ways different from *jñāna yoga* as described by Śaṅkara and discussed earlier in Chap. 6. In *bhakti* yoga, the person overcomes the ego by surrendering herself to another, such as God, in true love and devotion. Such surrender through love and devotion essentially enables one to disarm the ego and its stranglehold on the person. The same appears to be the case in other yogas as well. In *karma yoga*, selfless action takes the place of love and devotion (*bhakti*). The action, however, is to be delinked from the ego. The action in *karma* yoga is altruistic and for a righteous cause that transcends the ego and the gratifications it seeks. Therefore, the action that is involved in *karma yoga* is *niṣkāma karma* or desireless action, action that has no ego-involvement and pays no attention to the results. Desireless action is action divested of the ego.

Utilizing the Body–Mind–Consciousness model outlined in this book, we could interpret Patañjali yoga as a method to bring about the union of body, mind, and consciousness. While the lower order practices of yoga facilitate the union of mind and body, the higher order exercises of *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi* help to unite the mind with consciousness.

We may recall that some of the classical systems of Indian thought like Buddhist philosophical schools deny the existence of transcendental self, or any self for that matter, over and above the mental states a person is in. It is interesting that all these schools also subscribe to the yoga path. In fact one of the Indian Buddhist schools is named after yoga and is called Yogācāra. Obviously, the so-called self-realization will not be acceptable to them as the goal to be pursued. For them, the goal as discussed in previous chapters is *nirvāṇa*, a state of enlightenment. *Nirvāṇa* literally means "blown out" or "extinguished." What is blown out here is ego-driven desires and passions. What is extinguished is the ego. Practices like yoga are believed to be eminently suited means to achieve this.

It follows from the above that the prime application of yoga is ego control. Such control/transcendence of the ego is believed to result in self-discovery, promote altruistic behavior, and spread empathy with and love for others. This is what we learn from the classical application of yoga across traditions with different philosophical persuasions. However, contemporary research in yoga, and application of a variety of yogic practices have different goals. Yoga in much of the Western world is limited to certain physical practices aiming at conditioning the body and improving health and in some cases to cure illness. The sublime goal of ego-transcendence is hardly touched in researches on yoga limited to physical exercises. The physical practices have of course their own benefits. They help clean the body and prepare the ground for union between mind and body. Similarly, yoga involves exercises to clean the mind, which again is a necessary condition for bringing about the union between consciousness and mind. This apart, these exercises bestow certain other

benefits on the practitioner. It is therefore possible that one may be attracted to practice yoga for obtaining lower order benefits, ignoring the main purpose for which yoga was developed and practiced in the classical tradition.

As we note from Patañjali yoga, the culmination of yoga practice is in the triple effort of *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna,* and *samādhi*. This is collectively referred as *saṁyama*. *Saṁyama* is taken broadly as meditation. There is extensive research on meditation and some applications of yoga from a psychological perspective. There is reason to believe that much of this research presupposes that meditation involves transcendence of the limitations imposed on the persons by the existential conditions.

In the existential situation, the "person," who is the subject of psychological inquiry, finds herself conditioned by her ego sense and thus becomes limited in a variety of ways. Conditioned, the person becomes an instrument of individualized thought, action, and passion. One's knowledge is therefore biased, subjective, and severely limited by the situation. Liberation of the individual from this subjective predicament and restoration of the person to the unconditioned state of experiencing "pure consciousness" is transcendence. It culminates in the elevation of the person to a state of perfection. There are several intermediatory stages where we find improvement in the physical and psychological health of a practicing person and progressive cognitive excellence in her.

Transcendence may be understood in a metaphysical, absolutistic, and otherworldly sense or in a relativistic and secular sense. In its absolutistic sense, transcendence is complete liberation from all limiting conditions, which is the realization of pure being, the person as pure consciousness, unattached, and egoless. It is perfection in its ultimacy. In Yoga it is the state of *kaivalya.* In a relativistic sense, it is the progressive striving toward the goal of achieving the unconditioned state, the ideal of perfection. It signifies the transformation of the individual so that she overcomes in various degrees and through different stages the subjectively conditioned biases, prejudices, and predispositions that limit her knowledge, action, and being. These are represented as a variety of *samādhi* states in Patañjali yoga and *jhāna* states in Buddhism. These were mentioned in our chapter on consciousness.

The emphasis on transcendence is not unique to yoga or Hinduism. Many religions believe that it is possible to achieve transcendence in its absolute sense. For example, according to Buddhism, the *arhat* who has realized *nirvāṇa* is a totally liberated person. In practice, however, the religious rituals and prescriptions may be aimed at less grandiose objectives.

In the cognitive sphere, transcendence would suggest that the discursive and differentiating processes give way to undifferentiated and intuitive comprehension. The dichotomy of the subjective and objective disappears. Knowledge is now devoid of all distortions brought about by the limiting conditions of the existential situation. It is knowing reality the way it really is. At the level of feeling, it is peace, compassion, and calm contentment. The person now is detached, stable, and unobsessed. She is thus a perfectly functioning being. Similar claims are made, as we noted, in the *Bhagavad Gītā* for the one who achieves the state of *sthitaprajña* and in Yoga for the yogin who achieves the *niruddha* state.

According to Yoga, reality does not reveal itself directly to us in our ordinary states of consciousness. In a significant sense, as we discussed previously, our usual understanding of reality is a personal construct that is constrained by one's psychobiological system—a construct no doubt shared by most others for the reason that they function largely within similar systems. The inter-individual agreement does not necessarily guarantee truth. Our ability to receive and process information, for example, is limited by our sensory apparatus, the brain and nervous system, and is influenced by our expectations, attitudes, motivation, and prior experience. Consequently, our knowledge of reality, rather our experience of it, is not of reality as-such. In several respects it is incomplete, imperfect, and blemished. But it does not have to be so, according to Yoga. The imperfections and limitations come in degrees; and they are overcome in a similar manner in degrees. Therefore, the goal of perfection serves the function of taking us closer to truth, which is an approximation and not an absolute perfection in our thoughts, feelings, and actions.

The quest for perfection, then, is a search for the way to enhance human potential, limited as it is by the human condition. It is a search for knowledge that is true and unbiased, happiness beyond the pleasures of the senses, and freedom from the confines of the ego and individuality. Perfection in its ultimacy is a total absorption of the individual in the subject of experience, and a complete blending of one's thinking, feeling, and willing to make one function as a holistic being. It involves complete coalescence of one's cognitive, volitional, and affective states into a unified experience that transcends the conventional dichotomies of common experience, such as the subject and object, the "I-ness" and "otherness," and reason and experience. It involves knowing truth (transcending subjective bias), experiencing bliss (transcending pain and pleasure), and acting free (transcending situational constraints).

It is well to recognize that in the quest for perfection, the individual progresses through various stages which are marked by distinctive characteristics. To draw from Buddhistic literature, there are numerous states of consciousness with their own distinguishing features, but they can all be hierarchically arranged with reference to their relative freedom from the inhibiting influences and the limiting conditions on our thought and action. Again, the various states of *samādhi*, as described in the *Yoga Sūtras*, are states progressively leading to perfection.

If transcendence is the goal, meditation is a means of achieving it. The practice of meditation is paramount in bringing about a transformation in one's cognitive style, dispositions, and emotional feeling. If meditation is thus considered a means of achieving transcendence, i.e., overcoming the limitations surrounding the human condition, then the practice of meditation should have profound effects on human thoughts, feelings, and actions. The possible effects would be eminently amenable for empirical study and research. For example, research can address questions like these: Does meditation lead to cognitive excellence? Is practice of meditation conducive to personal transformation? If so, how?

The purpose of meditation, we are told by Patañjali and the successive Rāja Yoga practitioners, is to control the wanderings of the mind (*citta vṛttis*) and empty the mind of its thought content. It follows that yogic meditation may be helpful in

controlling ruminative mentation and negative thoughts/feelings, which often characterize maladjustment and the troubled psyche. In fact, "silencing" of one's thoughts is an important sign of progress in meditation. Therefore, yogic meditation should have useful therapeutic implications. Also, there are several hindrances to practicing meditation such as fatigue, doubt, delusion, and instability of the mind (*Yoga Sūtras*, I.30). Successful practice of meditation implies that these hindrances are overcome at least to some degree. Therefore, emotional well-being, reduced anxiety, and overcoming ego-involvement may be expected to correlate with progress in successful meditation.

The practice of yoga is also associated with the manifestation of extraordinary abilities, including extrasensory acquisition of information and nonconventional interaction with the environment. Meditation is believed to lead to enlightenment and self-transforming peak experiences. Thus, yoga and meditation could have numerous benefits to humankind at various levels, ranging from ultimate *kaivalya* to ordinary excellence in one's thoughts, feelings, and actions. There is a vast territory here with potentially rich mines ready for excavation. Indeed, this was not lost sight of. There are literally hundreds of research publications during the past 50 years, and there is continued academic interest in the study of meditation and its effects. It is not surprising that the United Nations declared June 21 as International Yoga Day.

Before we discuss possible applications of meditation, it may be helpful to first learn what we know of meditation from contemporary research. The bulk of meditation research falls into one of two categories. One category of meditation research is aimed at understanding meditation and how it works. The second category has to deal with the effects of meditation and their possible application. Again, in both these categories there are those that are neurobiologically oriented and those that are basically psychological. We will briefly review and discuss the research findings in these four areas and explore their possible psychological applications.

8.1 What Is Meditation?

In Patañjali yoga, meditation is a means/technique to control the mind and its constantly wandering nature. In a more sublime sense it is a way of turning the focus of the mind away from transactional engagement with sensory reality to focus on the transcendental realm of being. It is moving from self to *self*, from the entanglement with *prakṛti* to *puruṣa* as-such. It is also possible to understand meditation as a state of the mind achieved by the triple effect of *dharaṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* described as a state of *saṁyama.* Often, these two senses of meditation —meditation as a *technique* to control the wanderings of the mind and meditation as a *state* of the mind where these wanderings are brought under control—are conflated. Such a conflation has adverse implications for interpreting the results of research as we will discuss later. The counterparts in Buddhist practices to *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna,* and *samādhi*, which nearly convey the same meaning, are called *upacāra*,

appanā, and *jhāna*. However, the confusion between state and technique is less in Buddhist discussions where *jhāna* with its different defined stages more appropriately refers to a state rather than a technique.

Much of meditation research is carried out with subjects practicing a variety of meditative techniques. These include Rāja Yoga, Transcendental Meditation (TM), and Buddhist Meditation, such as Vipāsana (*Vipaśyanā*) and Zen, and more recently Tibetan meditation. Also, a variety of other adaptations of the above are used by researchers such as Benson (1975), Carrington (1977), Kabat-Zinn (2003), Segal et al. (2002), and several others. The roots of all the techniques in vogue may be traced to the Hindu and Buddhist practices.

8.1.1 Yogic Meditation

The goal of yoga practice, as we frequently mention, is to control the natural tendency of the mind to wander. The method of controlling it consists in obtaining a certain attentional focus called *ekāgratā.* When the wanderings or mental fluctuations are controlled, one reaches a state of stillness, mental quiescence, quietude, and absorption. It is designated as a state of *samādhi*, where awareness is unaffected by the normal psychological processes that tend to bias and distort one's thoughts and perceptions. The purpose of Patañjali's yoga is to attain *kaivalya.* The *niruddha* state, where the psychic fluctuations are completely restrained and controlled, is the way to achieve *kaivalya*. This can be achieved by practicing certain psychophysical exercises that include focused attention and concentration. Again, *samādhi* has several shades and grades. Patañjali himself speaks of more than one variety of *samādhi*.

The mind is set in fluctuation not only by sensory stimulations as mentioned earlier in some detail, but also by the subliminal factors called *vāsanā*s and *saṁskāra*s. The *vāsanā*s are basic tendencies, either inborn or acquired. Having their own dynamism, they constantly strive for expression in consciousness as precipitative *vṛtti*s. A good deal of man's experience is determined by these inborn tendencies. Unless these *vāsanā*s are revealed, controlled, and eradicated, the *citta* cannot be fully restrained. Yoga practice, therefore, aims not only at shutting out the external inputs provided by sensory stimulation but also the "burning" of the subliminal latencies so that the *niruddha* state is attained.

The *citta* is not merely a canvas that takes on impressions. It is not merely a passive plastic state that takes on various forms. As Dasgupta puts it: "There is also the reserve power in it called the *śakti*, by virtue of which it can reflect and react back upon itself and change the passivity of its transformations into active states associated with will and effort. Thus, man's thoughts and actions are pure psychological determinations. But there is in the *citta* is the reserve force by which it can act upon itself and determine itself. This force gets its full play in the strong effort required in meditation by which a particular state is sought to be kept in a steady condition as a check against the natural flowing tendency" (1930, pp. 286–287).

As we have seen, Yoga formulates a psychophysiological method involving eight steps to control the fluctuations of the psyche. The first two are *yama* and *niyama*, which include certain moral commandments such as truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, cleanliness, and contentment. The next two, *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*, are physical exercises that involve sitting in comfortable postures and practicing breath control. The fifth stage, *pratyāhāra*, is a specialized form of introspection, a passive attentive state, designed to have access to the workings of the psyche and have access to bare perceptions. The last three, *dhāraṇā* (concentration), *dhyāna* (meditation), and *samādhi* (a standstill state of psyche) are the most important ones in attaining the yogic meditative state. In fact, meditation properly refers to these practices and not to the preliminaries.

The first five are preparatory and the last three are the essential stages of yoga. According to Patanjali's own characterization, the first five are the outer layers (*bahiraṅga*), whereas the last three are the inner core (*antaraṅga*) of yoga. The need for the ethical and physiological practices in the yogic training is not difficult to understand. Desires and sensory indulgence encourage further involvement in the sensory processes resulting in constant fluctuations of the psyche which are precisely what yoga seeks to control. The physical exercises are also designed to control internal processes, to reduce the sensory input from outside, and to ensure bodily health, the failure of which would be a source of distractions.

The *pratyāhāra* or introspective stage is quite important. It seems to focus on certain internal monitoring processes, some sort of biofeedback. It is what appears to be the connecting link between the physiological and the psychological exercises. It is by introspection that the practitioner of yoga is able to regulate the body to suit the requirements of his mental states. Such introspection, it would seem, enables the yogin to isolate those experiences he is seeking, and to produce them at will later.

Now, the object of all these exercises is to enable one to concentrate. There are some who could achieve desired levels of concentration without the recommended exercises. They could skip them. Concentration or *dhāraṇā* produces in us a state in which the natural wandering of our thoughts, the fluctuations of the psyche, are brought under control. In a state of concentration, the psyche attends to one thing so that there is intensification of activity of the mind in one particular direction. In a state of concentration the focus of attention is narrowed. This focus is expanded when one goes from concentration to contemplation or *dhyāna.* Contemplation helps to concentrate longer and to fix one's attention on any object for a length of time with ease and in an effortless manner. When this is achieved, the psyche progresses to a standstill state in which the mind is steady and becomes one with the object of concentration. This is the state of *samādhi*. The triple effort of *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* is called *saṁyama*. *Saṁyama* is meditation in its totality.

8.1.2 Buddhistic Meditation

The path of Buddhism, as we noted, is to achieve a state of perfection and transcendence called *nirvāṇa* (*nibbāna* in Pāli). The one who has realized *nibbāna* is the *arhat*, the perfect or the ideal man. *Arhatship* is the culmination of all psychic development. As *Saṁyutta Nikāya* puts it: "The destruction of desire, hate and illusion—that is called *arhtship*." Achieving the higher state of awareness, a state of unobsessed mind, free from the compulsions of ego and the delusion of permanence, is often described as "crossing the river." The one who "crosses the river" realizes the four noble truths. He knows about suffering, how it arises, its extinction, and the way to achieve it. *Saṁyutta Nikāya* (V, 199–200) mentions five steps in the path of the monk from *saṁsāra* to sainthood (*arhatship*). They are (1) faith in Buddha's teachings, (2) vigor or motivation to strive to get rid of undesirable states of mind and to acquire, maintain, preserve, and enhance wholesome mental states, (3) practice of mindfulness, (4) cultivation of concentration and one-pointed attention, and (5) attainment of wisdom, which is enlightenment itself. Indeed these are remarkable in their similarity with the prescriptions contained in the *Yoga Sūtras.*

Mindfulness and concentration are central exercises in the pursuit of enlightenment and transcendence. These two are not different and opposing practices. They are necessarily complementary. Mindfulness is recommended to the monks as a practice for purification of body and mind and for successfully proceeding on the path of *nirvāṇa*. Mindfulness is applied in four ways (1) contemplating the body in the body; (2) contemplating the feelings in the feelings; (3) contemplating the mind in the mind; and (4) contemplating the mental states in the mental states.

Contemplating the body in the body begins with paying attention to breathing. "Mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out." Similarly the monk goes through a variety of activities such as walking and eating. Then he reflects on the body itself from the head to foot, the various impurities in it, and the various elements of which it is composed and into which it would be decomposed.

Contemplating the feelings in the feelings consists in paying attention to states of pain and pleasure or lack of them. *Majjhima Nikāya* describes how a monk lives contemplating the mind in the mind in the following way:

> He comprehends the mind which has passion and that which has none as such, which has hatred and that which has none as such, which has confusion and which has none as such; he comprehends the collected mind, the distracted mind as such; the mind which has become great and that which has not as such; the mind which has some other or no other (mental state) superior to it; the mind which is concentrated or that which is not as such …. It is thus that a monk lives contemplating the mind in the mind. (Conze et al. 1954/1995, p. 58)

Finally, mindfulness is directed at contemplating mental states in mental states. This exercise involves five steps. First, the practitioner contemplates the mental states from the point of view of the five hindrances (desire, ill-will, restlessness, worry, or doubt). Second, she contemplates on mental acts such as perception, feeling, and awareness. Third, she contemplates on the six aspects of awareness

system and the six aspects of the response system. Fourth, she contemplates on the seven steps to the path of enlightenment, when they are present and when they are not present in her experience. Fifth, the monk contemplates on the four noble truths and comprehends that "this is suffering, this is its uprising, this its stopping, this the course leading to its stopping" (*Majjhima Nikāya*, I, 55–63).

Such passive and yet incisive attention to the details of the constitution, composition, and functioning of the body and mind in mindfulness exercises reminds us of the *pratyāhāra* phase of Rāja Yoga practice, where the attention is focused inward. *Pratyāhāra* is, however, limited to the workings of the mind and the voluntary control of internal attention states, whereas mindfulness is much broader and includes attention to body as well. Another difference is that mindfulness appears to be limited to observation and understanding rather than control of the processes involved.

Buddhaghoṣa's *Visuddhimagga* is the most important sourcebook for understanding Theravāda Buddhistic meditation. We find in it a very detailed and insightful account of the surroundings and attitudes necessary for meditation, as well as a comprehensive description of the specific ways of training necessary for focusing attention to attain a variety of subtle meditative states.

8.1.3 Neurophysiological Aspects of Meditation

A great fillip for scientific research on meditation came from Maharishi Mahesh Yogi of Transcendental Meditation fame. Himself a scientist by training, the Maharishi encouraged scientific studies of meditation. Further, he popularized the notion that there is, in addition to waking, dreaming, and sleep states, a fourth state of consciousness which is physiologically identifiable. The antecedents of this assumption may be traced to an early field study by French cardiologist Brosse (1946), who took electrophysiological measurements of practicing yogins. She reported some unusual things like temporary stopping of heartbeats by a yogin. Anand et al. (1961) found significantly reduced pulse rate and oxygen consumption by a yogin confined in an airtight box.

The first major study to investigate whether "transcendental meditation produces a fourth major state of consciousness which is physiologically and biochemically unique" was by R.K. Wallace published in the prestigious magazine *Science* (1970). Among the 27 subjects who participated in this study, Wallace found significant decrease in oxygen consumption, carbondioxide elimination, cardiac output, heart rate, and respiration rate during meditation as compared to pre- and post-meditation periods. He also found among his meditating subjects increases in skin resistance and changes in EEG frequencies.

The findings of Wallace were claimed to be the first major scientific confirmation of the existence of a fourth state of consciousness believed to be a transcendental state qualitatively different from waking and other states. Soon, a number of studies

appeared to support the claims of Wallace and associates (Wallace 1970; Wallace et al. 1971; Wallace and Benson 1972). Those by Dhanaraj and Singh (1977) and Corey (1977) also gave results suggestive of the hypometabolic state associated with practice of meditation. Reviewing the early literature on meditation, Schuman (1980) noted: "Based on research involving practitioners of Yoga, Zen, or Transcendental Meditation (TM), meditation has been considered a unique psychophysiological state, associated with distinct configuration of autonomic and electrocortical changes" (p. 333).

Soon there appeared also critical reviews of the work of Wallace and studies that questioned the assumption that the electrophysiological effects attributed to meditation are unique to meditation and are indicative of the so-called fourth state. Summarizing their own research results, Pagano and Warrenburg (1983) concluded: "we regret to report our search for a unique or dramatic effect directly attributable to meditation thus far has not been successful" (p. 203). Fenwick et al. (1984) also pointed out that "the metabolic changes and the EEG phenomena observed during TM can be explained within the framework of accepted physiological mechanisms" (p. 462). It is suggested that the phenomena observed during meditation are not unique to meditation and that many of the same autonomic and metabolic changes are found also during states of sleep and drowsiness.

At the same time, we may also note that there is indeed some research which showed observable differences between a meditative state and drowsiness (Ikemi 1988). Also, a few studies of meditation have shown significant increases in theta and alpha coherence during meditation unlike other states (Travis et al. 2002; Aftanas and Golocheikine 2003; Faber et al. 2004). Further, in a study by Jevning et al. (1996), increase in cerebral blood flow is observed during periods of meditation, unlike in sleep states where there is typically a decrease in cerebral blood flow. Also relevant in this context are studies where deep meditation resulted in increased arousal as indicated by EEG gamma activity. In fact, one of the earliest EEG studies by Das and Gastaut (1955) showed EEG activity in gamma frequency indicating high levels of arousal among yogins believed to be in a state of deep meditation. More recently, a study of long-term practitioners of Tibetan Buddhist meditation by Lutz et al. (2004) showed "sustained electroencephalographic high amplitude gamma-band oscillations and phase-synchrony during meditation." These results are different from those obtained with Sahaja yoga mediations studied by Aftanas and Golocheikine (2001, 2002, 2003). There is good reason, therefore, to think that even if meditation is associated with distinct neurophysiological changes, these changes may not be uniform but are relative to the technique of meditation employed.

A recent summary of research on Transcendental Meditation (TM) by Roger Chalmers (2012) lists a large number of studies over a period of 40 years. He claims that they have shown that Transcendental Meditation gives rise to a unique physiological state "characterized by deep rest, increased blood flow to the brain, and decreased peripheral vascular resistance." He further points out that these studies taken together "clearly distinguish the physiology of TM from sleep, drowsiness, or ordinary relaxation" and "gives rise to a fourth major state of consciousness."

Among the electrophysiological markers of this state, he cites the EEG studies of meditators showing greatly reduced level of excitation in the nervous system with increased alertness at the same time.

Further, these studies show increased integration between different areas of the brain with high EEG coherence "between front and back of the brain and between right and left cerebral hemispheres." This relationship appears to be strong with TM than with other forms of meditation. TM is also associated with high levels of alpha activity spread throughout the cerebral cortex rather than localized to any specific region of the brain. It is further observed that EEG coherence appears to be positively correlated with level of TM practice (Travis 2004; Travis and Shear 2010). A magneto-encephalographic study by Yamamoto et al. (2006) points to prefrontal cortex and anterior cingulated regions of the brain as the possible source of the widespread EEG alpha wave activity observed during the practice of TM.

There is also some evidence that the experience of a state of pure consciousness may be associated with certain physiological phenomena. Assuming that *prāṇāyama*, a step in yoga practice, indicates a possible link between breath control and higher states of awareness, a number of experimental studies were conducted to test whether breath suspension episodes among meditators are associated with subjective reports of pure conscious experience. For example, Farrow and Hebert (1982) report several studies in this area. The results of these studies show that (a) meditating subjects report ten times the number of periods of respiratory suspension than the control nonmeditating subjects, and that (b) the subjective reports of pure consciousness experienced by meditating subjects highly correlate with the occurrence of breath suspension episodes. After reviewing the relevant literature, Austin (1998) concluded: "These studies of TM subjects link clear, thought-free consciousness with two quite different sets of physiological evidence. The most impressive of these events suspends respiratory drive and causes a relative hypoventilation. The second cluster of associated findings is more subtle and variable. They include peripheral autonomic changes and also tendencies toward increased EEG coherence" (p. 97).

Reviews of EEG studies of meditation generally point to increased alpha and theta activity, especially among those practicing TM (Lutz et al. 2007). It is well known that increase of alpha activity is associated with the experience of a relaxed state of mind. However, what is not clear is how the increased alpha activity is caused by meditation beyond reducing the arousal level (Cahn and Polich 2006). Moreover, as we have seen, there are indeed cases where subjects in a deep meditative state have shown increased levels of arousal. Is it the case that different meditation practices give rise to different EEG patterns?

Neurophysiological studies of meditation are interesting in many ways. We may expect them to suggest some reliable objective correlates of the subjective experience of meditation. This would help meditation research in significant ways by providing measures to understand the depth of meditation independently of the less-reliable subjective reports. However, it is unlikely that neurophysiological studies would ever completely unlock the secrets of meditation. A profound meditative experience in principle may not be reduced to certain cortical activation,

neurochemical, or hormonal changes. The meditator in some ways appears to gain control over the autonomic activity. The simultaneous stimulation of sympathetic and parasympathetic systems, being relaxed and aroused at the same time, by advanced meditators, strongly suggests this. The voluntary control of cerebral activity and autonomic and hormonal changes, if firmly established, could signal incontrovertible evidence for a noncortical interpretation of volition and eventually the existence of mind and consciousness independent of the brain.

From the above review of neurophysiological investigations of meditation it is clear that so far no clear neurophysiological pattern that could be considered a sort of signature of meditation is found. However, reviewers point out that the "CNS function is clearly affected by meditation, but the specific neural changes and differences among practices are far from clear" (Cahn and Polich 2006). Therefore, it is now a common practice to review the studies under the banner of a given meditative technique such as TM rather than club together all studies. For example, Lutz et al. (2007) report that "alpha global increases and alpha coherence over frontal electrodes are associated with TM practice" as seen in the study by Morse et al. (1997). Further, the meditation practices involving focused attention on an object appear to be associated with increases in alpha and theta amplitude. At the same time, there is also evidence of increased EEG activity in the beta and gamma range. In objectless meditation practices such as those studied by Lutz et al., as we mentioned above, the main finding is that the ratio of fast-frequency EEG activity (25–42 Hz) to slow-frequency EEG (4–13 Hz) is initially higher at the beginning compared to baseline, and that the difference increases sharply during meditation.

These differences in the EEG activity of meditators practicing different techniques are essentially uninterpretable, notwithstanding the well-meaning ad hoc explanations offered. Decreased oscillations indicate decreased processing of information for the sensory or motor areas of the brain. The increased frequencies suggest increased processing. The most that can be said is that certain practices are associated with an increase or decrease in the activities in certain areas of the brain. Similar patterns may be seen in ordinary states of relaxation and intense cognitive activity. If we were to make any generalizations about the effects of meditation, they should be more than technique-specific. If all these practices are indeed techniques leading to a meditative state, what is important is that we do not confuse the neurophysical states associated with the techniques as the physiological states of the meditative state as such.

Unfortunately, the failure to clearly distinguish between meditative techniques and meditative states has caused a significant amount of confusion. It would seem that the variety of techniques employed in different meditative practices may have different neurophysiological configurations. However, they may all converge on a common endpoint, which may be seen as the meditative state. The meditative state itself may not fit into a unique neurophysiological description, either because there is not a single meditative state but different meditative states with different neurological correlates, or because meditative states are simply beyond any kind of neurophysiological description. A meditative state may be simply a functional state

that bestows on the meditator certain abilities that seem to exceed her normal capabilities. This possibility should be kept in mind when interpreting neurological correlates of meditative practices.

What is important is that meditation research must not confound the meditative techniques with meditative states, and should clearly identify them as such in their studies. They may then find whether different yogic practices have identifiable but different neurophysiological correlates, even if they do not portray one unique neurophysiological configuration. Any insights into the neurophysiological correlates of meditative practices, even if they were technique-specific, would be useful checkposts to aid the meditator. Similarly, researchers may seek to find if there are any reliable neurophysiological indices of meditative states. If the research does show, as I suspect, that the meditative state is not associated with a neurophysiological signature, it makes it no less real because it may be beyond neurophysiological description.

Equally important is the need to have conceptual clarity and clear understanding of the traditional insights. What we find instead are facile generalizations that are often quite misleading. For example, since Wallace's report of 1970, the meditation state achieved by TM practitioners is labeled by these researchers the fourth state of consciousness as distinguished from waking, dream, and sleep states. In the classical Indian literature since the Upaniṣads, *turīyā*, which literally means fourth, is considered to be extremely rare. *Turīyā* is a transcognitive state. It is, in our view, entirely unreasonable that the 27 people Wallace investigated were anywhere close to reaching the *turīyā* state. The kind of physiological indices Wallace monitored and felt indicative of the fourth state are hardly relevant in the context of asserting the existence of the fourth state. In order to make any valid claim, the research should first identify and find evidence to the claim that the subjects studied have indeed experienced the *turīyā* state and then go on to identify the neurophysiological correlates of such a state. The most that can be said of these studies is that people practicing TM have shown certain autonomic and electrocortical characteristics. They may or may not be unique to the TM practice. Clearly, they are not associated with the fourth state, if we mean by it the state of *turīyā.*

There is some suggestive evidence from neurophysiological studies of the possible link between meditation and attention. Apart from the fact that almost all meditative techniques involve manipulation of attention in some form, there is emerging evidence from neuroimaging studies that the prefrontal and frontal areas of the brain are relatively more activated during meditation. Since these areas are associated with attention, it seems likely that meditation practices do indeed involve "increased attentional demand." This area appears to have some potential for further exploration.

8.1.4 Meditation and Attention

Psychological research on meditation also suggests that attention is a key component of meditation and that it is crucial for attaining a meditative state. As we noted, control of the mind is the best means to achieve the goal of yoga, which is *kaivalya*,

liberation from the limiting conditions of existence. Attention is indeed the key for such a control. All meditation practices involve essentially exercises to channel the mind in desired directions. Surveying 14 different techniques of meditation, Goleman (1978) says: "The need for the meditator to retrain his attention, whether through concentration or mindfulness, is the single invariant ingredient in the recipe for altering consciousness of every meditative system" (p. 111). It makes sense to consider the practice of meditation as a means for deploying attention in desired ways in order to gain control over the natural wanderings of the mind. The object of attentional focus may be different in different systems of meditation, but attentional control appears to be at the core of all meditational practices.

Meditation is a process initiated by focusing attention on an object or mental or body state for a prolonged period resulting in a special state of mind characterized by stability and tranquility, equipoise and quiescence. This process appears to have two important effects. First, sustained one-pointed attention would lead to a state of containment/absorption in which one experiences expanded awareness that transcends the limitations imposed by the normal psychobiological processes, an awareness that leads to cognitive excellence and unbiased knowledge. It results in a nonhabitual and unconditioned state of mind, free from distortions and predispositions, which is open to see things the way they truly are. In order to attain such an intentional focus and sustain it, it is necessary to avoid distractions, both psychological and biological. As a consequence, other benefits such as psychological and biological well-being may accrue. They are, however, not a direct result of meditation. Inasmuch as meditation enables selective deployment of attention, it may be possible to gain control over certain psychobiological processes over which we normally lack volitional control. Thus, it would seem that if meditative practices help gain volitional control of autonomic processes or achieve psychic abilities, they may not be regarded as the essence of meditation. They may not be taken as ends in themselves. Classical systems warn us against pursuing them as short-term goals, because they become hurdles on the path of perfection.

The second effect, which is not always appreciated, is that meditative attention seems to lead to a state of the mind where, in addition to cognitive excellence, there is personal transformation made possible by the intrinsic binding of knowing and being in that state. According to classical wisdom, achieving a state of contentless consciousness, i.e., emptying the mind of sensory and cognitive content and making it silent, has the effect of bridging the existential gap between cognition and conduct. Personal transformation is a consequence of this state. In such a state there would be no conflict between beliefs and behavior in the mind. Thus meditation is a practice involving exercises in focusing attention on a chosen object, mental, or bodily state that results in a special state that has the twin effects of excellence in knowing and being. Such excellence includes (a) unbiased cognitive awareness, (b) transcognitive or meta-awareness, and (c) pure consciousness or awareness as-such. Further, (d) there is personal transformation which involves closing the gap between knowing and being, and overcoming the dissociation between belief and behavior.

There are also several empirical studies that suggest that meditation enhances one's attentive focus. The Embedded Figures Test is a commonly used psychological test which requires the subject to pay attention to a task and to ignore the distracting stimuli. Studies with children as well as adults who practiced meditation have shown improved performance on this test, suggesting enhanced attentional control on their part (Linden 1973; Kubose 1976).

Pelletier (1984) reported a study in which one group of subjects practiced standard TM for 3 months, whereas the second group was instructed to sit quietly for 20 min each morning for 3 months. The subjects in both groups were administered tests before and after 3 months of practice to measure autokinetic perception. The results of meditators showed a shift in the autokinetic effect toward increased field independence. No such effect was observed in the control group. Pelletier (p. 225, 1984) concludes:

> Since deployment of attention is the critical factor in determining performance on these perceptual tasks and since it is the expressed goal of meditation to achieve an inward, focused attention, it is suggested that these observed differences can be attributed to an alteration in the individual's deployment of attention due to meditative practice.

In a cross-sectional study of some attentional and affective concomitants of meditation, Davidson (1976) administered the Telligen Absorption Scale, the Shor Personal Experience Questionnaire, and the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory to four groups of subjects: nonmeditating controls, beginners, and short-term and long-term meditators. The results showed "reliable increases in measures of attentional absorption in conjunction with a reliable decrement in trait anxiety across groups as a function of length of time meditating." Jhansi Rani and Rao (1996) reported that practice of meditation (TM) by children had the effect of improved attention.

The neurophysiological as well as psychological studies appear to support the assumption implied in the classical literature that meditation is, in an important sense, an exercise of attention. Rao (2011a) has attempted to develop on this. He suggests that meditation is a process of moving from full attention through passive attention to "inattention." Full attention is focal and driven by volition. Passive attention is diffused and not directed. Inattention involves, in addition to the absence of attention to sensory images and other kinds of cognitive content, movement of attention in a reverse direction, away from content to consciousness *as-such.* Normal attention guides us to the content of awareness, whereas meditative inattention enables the person to move in the direction of accessing consciousness *as-such.* Classical Indian psychological thought in general, and Yoga in particular may be interpreted in light of the above conceptualization of attention. In any case, there is a need to move beyond the current postulations that do not show much promise to unravel the mysteries associated with meditation in Eastern thought.

There are of course meditative systems other than that of Patañjali that do not explicitly speak of attention, such as the Tibetan *Loving-Kindness-Compassion* meditation (Lutz et al. 2004). However, attention appears to be the key component

of meditation even in these systems. Meditation involves focused attention, as in one-pointed concentration exercises in Patañjali yoga, and passive attention, as in some Buddhist forms of meditation. The endpoint of these exercises in either case is a state of "inattention," which is a paradoxical state of controlling the mental functions "inattentively," i.e., by restraining the usual cognitive activity. The Patañjali system places greater attention on focal attention as a starting point, whereas some others like mindfulness meditation emphasize passive meditation (Kabat-Zinn 1994). In Patañjali, focused attention (*dhāraṇā*) is only the first step. The second step, *dhyāna*, is less focused and more passive and diffused. Finally, *samādhi* is a cognitively standstill state of inattention, as we suggest. Compassion or altruist action in *karma yoga*, or self-surrender and celestial love in *bhakti yoga*, serve the same purpose of reaching an altered state of consciousness where the usual fluctuations of the mind are controlled. The endpoint, however, is *inattention*, which is the transformation of attention into an altogether different mode. It is not cortically sustained, focused attention, but one without focus and intention. It is attention in its most abstract form. It is in a sense like consciousness devoid of content.

8.2 Effects of Meditation

Today there is considerable interest in meditation research worldwide. A large amount of data has accumulated over a period of 50 years. However, the area is not without controversy and it is not easy to pick any unambiguous effects of meditation, either neurological or psychological, that could be convincingly used for applying meditation for practical purposes. A report by a team of researchers commissioned by an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Sciences, entitled *Meditation Practices for Health: State of the Research* is a typical example of the state of affairs as perceived in the mainstream. The report notes: "Many uncertainties surround the practice of meditation. Scientific research on meditation practices does not appear to have a common theoretical perspective and is characterized by poor methodological quality. Firm conclusion on the effects of meditation practices in health care cannot be drawn based on available evidence" (Ospina et al. 2007, p. v).

The above conclusion may be justified from the perspective of this team of researchers. That there is no common theoretical framework is something to be expected when one combines such different and in some ways disparate practices like Qi Gong and Tai Chi on the one hand and Yoga and Buddhist meditation on the other. Yes, among the thousand and odd research reports that appeared during the past 50 years there are many that are lacking in necessary methodological rigor and sophistication to draw firm conclusions. However, there are a few among them that are of the highest possible quality, and several that meet the expected standards. There is therefore little justification for an overall dismissal of the published research. If there is lack of uniformity in the results, it is more likely because of the

highly varied nature of the studies with significant differences in the meditation techniques employed and the level of meditative depth achieved by the practitioners. Also relevant in this context is the matter of degrees of research sophistication involved.

Further, much of meditation research carried out in the West is by those who may have had necessary methodological sophistication and expertise, but lacked the necessary insight into meditation as such. In the bulk of studies carried out in India, there are methodological problems even when there is some conceptual clarity. Again, as mentioned earlier, there is serious confusion and lack of clarity of the basic concepts used in the research on meditation in general. Notwithstanding the above problems, an objective and insightful review of the available literature leaves little doubt that there are indeed some interesting effects that are not without possible applications. We shall briefly review some of them.

Classical meditation is not meant to give any immediate psychophysical benefits to the practitioner. Instead they are believed to transform the person so that she may in the long run achieve self-realization by overcoming the existential constraints faced by humans. In fact, the Hindu and Buddhist manuals on the subject warn the practitioner of meditation to beware of the temptations on the way that may distract the person from the final goal. The short term benefits may not be taken as ends in themselves, as noted earlier, but be seen merely as signposts pointing to one's progress on the path. Thus the genuineness of some of the mundane/secular effects of meditation is recognized in the classical traditions, but the practitioners are discouraged from pursuing them as ends in themselves. Contemporary research does suggest, if not establish, that practice of meditation may indeed produce some cognitive, emotive and conative effects that are not only interesting in themselves but also have positive applications for one's health and well-being.

8.2.1 Spiritual and Psychic Effects

Meditation in Hindu and Buddhist practices is traditionally linked with spiritual development. Yoga's ultimate goal of *kaivalya* is linked with spiritual liberation and transformation of the person. In Buddhism, it is *nirvāṇa*, pursuit of transcendence from the existential bondage. Kristeller and Rikhye (2008) refer to two separate aspects relating to the effects of meditation on spiritual development. They are "those experiences that are accessible within a normal range of consciousness, and altered states encompassing mystical, psychic or paranormal effects" (p. 520).

In recent years spirituality has received increasing attention among scientists. Serious research linking spirituality with better health and wellness is published in mainstream journals. Koenig et al. (2001) in their *Handbook of Religion and Health* review about 1200 research reports and 400 reviews. As Levin (2001) points out: "Today the epidemiology of religion and the larger field of clinical research on religion and spirituality are well established in the scientific world and in the public consciousness" (p. viii).

The link of meditation to health is obvious if we connect meditation with spiritual development. However, there are too few studies that attempted to empirically investigate the effects of meditation on spiritual development. The main problem is defining spirituality and its identifying criteria. If experience of inner peace and decreased preoccupation with mundane day to day secular concerns are a sign of spiritual development, there is some evidence that practice of meditation may promote spiritual development (Kabat-Zinn 1990).

Extra-ordinary abilities (*siddhis*) such as telepathy and clairvoyance are believed to manifest during the practice of yoga. Patañjali devotes a major part of *Vibhūti Pāda*, Part III of *Yoga-Sūtras* for describing a variety of paranormal phenomena. Braud (2008) has discussed at length the relevance of *Yoga-Sūtras* to parapsychology, the science that investigates paranormal phenomena. Braud describes how the psychophysical practices and principles contained in *Yoga-Sūtras* are supported by theory and research in parapsychology. There is indeed a great deal of empirical evidence suggestive, but by no means conclusive, of a positive relationship between practice of meditation and enhanced performance in parapsychological tests.

Schmeidler (1970) reported that her subjects obtained higher scores in an ESP test following a brief instruction in and practice of meditation and breathing exercises guided by a swami compared to their scores before the meditation session. The results of the study showed that while the performance in the premeditation run was close to chance expectation, the scores obtained after they meditated were significantly higher than chance expectation, suggesting that meditation may have been responsible for psi-hitting in the second run.

Osis and Bokert (1971) carried out three correlational studies and found meditation and ESP to be related in a complex manner. Questionnaires designed to measure changes in the state of consciousness were administered before and after each session. The ESP tests themselves were given after a period of meditation. A factor analysis of the questionnaire material revealed three stable factors. Of these, the factor of "self-transcendence and openness to experience" was found to be associated significantly with ESP scores. However, the correlation between ESP scores and meditation per se is relatively low. The investigators concluded that, among possibilities, the meager correlations between meditative experiences and ESP might be due to the subjects' experiencing the ESP tests as interruptions to their meditation, thus causing "task rivalry" and possibly a preferential effect.

In a PK (psychokinesis) study by Matas and Pantas (1971) subjects who had experience with some form of meditation meditated for 15 min before they attempted to influence by PK a random event generator. The results of the meditators were found to be significantly better than those of control subjects who performed identical tasks without meditating. In three series of experiments, Schmidt and Pantas (1971) found that a single subject performed significantly on a PK task after practicing Zen meditation for 20 min prior to the test.

At Andhra University, Rao et al. (1978) carried out a series of forced choice and free-response ESP tests to see whether subjects would obtain higher ESP scores after meditation than in premeditation sessions. The same subjects were tested in pre-and post-meditation sessions. Fifty-nine subjects who were practicing a

nonstandardized form of meditation at Anandashram in Pondicherry participated in this study. The ESP tests involved standard card tests with ESP symbols and guessing concealed pictures. In both the tests, the results showed that subjects obtained significantly better ESP scores in tests immediately following meditation than in tests carried out before the subjects meditated.

In an early review of research on meditation and psi (psychic ability), Honorton (1977) lists 16 studies. Out of these, nine experimental series gave significant evidence of psi among meditating subjects. The overall results of past studies thus suggest ESP on the part of meditating subjects; and they clearly warrant further research.

8.2.2 Cognitive Effects

There are a number of studies that investigated the effects of meditation on cognitive skills, a large number of them with TM practitioners. There is suggestive evidence that meditation helps to improve scores on intelligence and creativity (Travis 1979; Tjoya 1975; Cranson et al. 1991; So and Orme-Johnson 2001; Dixon et al. 2005). There is evidence for improved memory, learning ability, and cognitive flexibility with practice of meditation (Abrams 1977; Miskiman 1977; Dillbeck et al. 1981; Dillbeck and Araas-Vesley 1986). There are also a number of Indian studies that showed similar effects (Kocher 1976b; Sinha et al. 1978; Jangid et al. 1988; Rani and Rao 1996, 2000; Sridevi and Rao 2003). A meta-analysis of 34 studies related to cognition and meditation by Sedlmeier et al. (2008) support the notion that meditation may enhance cognitive skills involved in tasks of concentration and memory. Again, in the same analysis, six studies with intelligence test measures also show a positive effect with meditation.

Much of information processing cognitive activity goes on at the nonconscious subliminal level and involves various parts of the brain. Meditation involves focused attention. Further it also disengages the normal, habitual attentional processes such as scanning and analyzing so that the person can cultivate different kinds of engagement. This kind of disengagement from the usual and cultivation of new forms of engagement, as Kristeller and Rikhye (2008) point out, may be responsible for improved cognitive functions following meditation.

8.2.3 Conative Effects

One of the important aspects of yogic development is the access to new ways of knowing as may be seen from the acquisition of paranormal abilities like ESP. Another equally important aspect is the transformation of the person as seen in new ways of her behavior. In the Indian tradition, consciousness has two fundamental aspects, knowing (*cit*) and being (*sat*), unlike in the Western tradition where

consciousness is limited to its knowing aspect, i.e., awareness. Consciousness at the core is seen as undifferentiated unity of knowing and being. This is the rationale behind the Upaniṣadic statement, "to know *Brahman* is to be *Brahman*." Yoga and meditation are believed to lead a person to the pure and primordial state of consciousness where there is no differentiation between knowing and being. The outcome of *jñāna* yoga is one of bridging the divide between knowing and being. A highly developed meditative state is one in which knowing has a reflexive relationship with being with the result that there would be no gap between one's cognition and conduct, belief, and behavior. If this indeed is the case, meditation would have important therapeutic implications made possible by its expected behavioral effects. Consonance between cognition and conduct would have the consequence of a conflict-free mind, a state of positive mental health. In such states, knowing becomes a transformational experience for the person.

Several of health problems arise from our failure to put into practice what one knows. This is volitional failure to incorporate into one's behavior what one is cognitively aware. Most of the debilitating addictions such as alcoholism, smoking, and drug abuse are due to such a failure. Therefore, there is good reason that meditation may help to bridge the gap between cognition and conation.

There are a number of studies that showed reduction in smoking, alcohol consumption, and drug abuse following meditation. Marlatt (2002) noted the usefulness of Buddhist meditation in treating addictive behavior. Raina et al. (2001) reported results that showed significantly greater recovery rate of individuals with alcohol dependence syndrome following yoga treatment compared to physical exercise. Interestingly this study is one of the three identified as being among the highest quality studies in the skeptical report on meditation by Ospina et al. (2007). A meta-analysis of 198 studies by Alexander et al. (1994) showed results that indicated marked reduction in smoking, alcohol consumption, and illicit drug use following Transcendental Meditation.

Another obvious area of application of meditation from the volitional perspective is for control of compulsive-obsessive behavior as, for example, in uncontrolled eating. Legend tells us how the Buddha helped a king to overcome his over indulgence in food and consequent obesity. Jean Kristeller pioneered work in this area using mindfulness-based meditation. She found rapid improvement in the eating patterns of individuals with binge eating disorder following her training course in mindfulness-based meditation (Kristeller and Hallett 1999; Kristeller et al. 2006).

8.2.4 Emotional Effects

The practice of yoga, is generally believed to lead to an equipoise and emotionally balanced state of the mind. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that meditation may lead to reduction in anxiety and stress, and help those suffering from stress-related ailments like hypertension. There is indeed some empirical evidence suggestive of

this. Kolsawalla (1978) noted increased emotional maturity and feeling at peace with oneself on the part of those practicing yoga.

There are a number of studies that seem to suggest that meditation has the effect of reducing stress (Goleman and Schwartz 1976; Linden 1973; Patel 1993). Vahia et al. (1972, 1973a, b) reported results suggesting that a therapy based on Patañjali's yoga is more effective than pseudotherapy in treating some psychiatric outpatients. In one study the subjects were outpatients at the K.E.M. Hospital in Bombay aged between 15 and 50 years, who were diagnosed as suffering from stress and anxiety. They were randomly assigned to two groups. The subjects in the two groups were matched on a number of relevant variables. The clinical assessments, as well as psychological testing, were done by those who did not know to which group the subjects belonged. The results showed statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups. The experimental group improved significantly in comparison to the control group. There was a significant reduction in the anxiety scores of patients in the experimental group and not in the control group.

Kocher and Pratap (1971, 1972) found that their subjects obtained significantly lower scores on neuroticism and anxiety scales after they went through a series of daily yogic practices including *āsana*s and breathing practices carried out over 3 weeks. In a study of the effect of yoga practice on the neuroticism and anxiety scores of subjects, Kocher (1972) found that the subjects who practiced yoga obtained significantly lower scores on neuroticism, anxiety, and general hostility after 8 months of practice consisting of *āsana*s, *prāṇāyāma,* and *kriyā*s (cleansing exercises). No such effects were observed in a control group of subjects who did not practice yoga. According to the author, both groups were matched for intelligence, education, sex, age, and socioeconomic status.

Kocher (1976a) confirmed these findings in a subsequent study with students who enrolled in a certificate course in yoga and practiced yoga daily 90 min for over 3 weeks. This study did not have a control group. In a study by Girodo (1974), patients diagnosed as "anxious" and "neurotic" practiced TM-like meditation. Anxiety-symptom questionnaires administered every 2 weeks revealed a significant reduction of anxiety symptoms after the eighth session of meditation. Linden (1973) also reported significant decrease in anxiety scores from pre- to post-treatment conditions involving Zen meditation. No such effect was found in control subjects.

In a study with college students, Smith (1976) found that the subjects who practiced TM obtained significantly lower trait anxiety scores than the control subjects. The anxiety scores of TM meditators did not, however, differ significantly from the scores of subjects in control treatment groups who simply sat with their eyes closed. Oak and Bhole (1982) also reported a decrement in neuroticism and anxiety scores among asthmatics undergoing yogic treatment. Anantharaman and Kabir (1984) found no significant changes in the anxiety scores of their subjects after 3 months of yoga practice, which included simple *āsana*s and *prāṇāyāma.* They, however, found significant changes in other variables, including blood pressure and pulse rate.

In a study involving a sample of 356 nonclinical subjects, Vinod et al. (1991) reported significant effect of yoga on reducing anxiety. In a study by Bhushan and Sinha (2001), significant decrease in anxiety symptoms were observed among subjects with high anxiety levels after practice of *yoganidrā*. Working with young prisoners, Jain (2003) found significant decrease in anxiety after practicing meditation.

There are also a number of published reports suggesting that practice of meditation helps to reduce stress, anxiety, tension, and depression in different job settings. They include studies by Haratani and Hemmi (1990), Alexander et al. (1993), De Armond (1996), Sheppard (1997), and Broome et al. (2005). In a meta-analysis of mindfulness-based meditation studies, Grossman et al. (2004) found that meditation practice helps to reduce distress levels among patients.

The above results are very much in line with the rationale of yoga practice as-such from classical times. We may recall that according to Yoga, suffering is inherent in human existence and yoga practice is a way of overcoming it. The classical philosophical conception of suffering runs parallel to contemporary psychological notion of stress. Yoga may be seen as a method to develop strategies involving practice of detachment, desireless action, and focused attention, which are believed to lead to a stress-free state of equanimity.

Since stress and suffering are a part of one's existential encounter, the emphasis in the Indian tradition is not on stressors themselves but on the person and how deals with them. Coping with and overcoming stress becomes a primary concern. This stands in sharp contrast from the Western perspectives, where the focus is more on the stressors than on the person experiencing stress. As Evans (1998) points out, in the Eastern tradition, the primary interest is in understanding the relationship between coping and stress, whereas in the West it is the relation between the stressor and stress that is emphasized. Coping is seen as a moderating variable. Stress is produced by external events/agents. The stressor is the primary source of stress. The effects of stressor on the person are to some degree altered by the coping resources of the person. In the Indian tradition, it is the coping and not the stressor that is seen as the important factor in stress management. Desires and conflicts cause stress and suffering. Ego-centeredness is at the root of desires, which inevitably lead to conflicts. Therefore, ego-control/deconstruction and movement away from self-centeredness to altruism become the way to reduce suffering.

Palsane et al. (1986) discussed the Indian ideas on stress as contained in *Caraka Saṁhitā*, Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* and *Yoga Vāśiṣṭha* and concluded that "the Indian tradition focuses on the goals and expectancies the individual brings to the potentially stressful situation, and the avoidance of stress via internal control" (p. 11). This approach is considered different from the Western research, which focuses on environmental events.

Though the Indian and Western models of stress are different in their relative emphasis on the stressor and the stressed person, it is clear that both the stressor and the coping person are involved in the stressful situation. Therefore, we may not have full understanding of stress without understanding both. In this the two perspectives, Indian and Western, may be seen as complementary to and not competing with each other.

8.3 Therapeutic Applications

8.3.1 Health Benefits of Meditation

Meditation and Mortality Rate: Not only does practice of meditation appear to have suggestive beneficial effects in reducing anxiety, providing emotional stability, enhancing cognitive ability, and volitional control, there is also evidence that meditation may have the effect of reducing mortality rate among older population. A study by Alexander et al. (1989) provides clear evidence that suggests such a possibility. In this study, 73 elderly subjects with a mean age of 81 years were randomly assigned to four groups. One group practiced TM 20 min twice daily. The subjects in the second group were instructed in mindfulness involving a guided attention technique (MF). The third group (MR) consisted of the subjects who were required to sit comfortably with eyes closed, repeating to themselves any mental stimuli they found to be pleasant or comfortable. The fourth was a no-treatment, control group (NT). The subjects were randomly assigned to these groups and pretested on a number of measures, including cognitive flexibility, blood pressure, behavioral flexibility, and aging. They found no significant differences between the groups on any of these variables in the results of pretesting.

The subjects then participated in the assigned treatment for 3 months. After the completion of the 3-month period, they were again tested on the same measures. The results showed significant differences in the cognitive performance scores of the subjects of TM and MF groups compared to MR and nontreatment groups. There were also significant differences in systolic blood pressure following the 3 months' practice with TM group having the lowest followed by the mindfulness group. The most spectacular finding relates to the mortality rates observed during the following 3-year period. It is reported that all the subjects in the TM group survived, whereas the survival rate in the MF group was 87.5 %, and 65 % for the MR group. The survival rate of the residents of these homes for the elderly was 62.6. This finding is quite consistent with the results of a field study in which it was found that TM practitioners had approximately half as many hospitalizations or visits to the doctors as nonmeditating matched groups as revealed by the insurance claims (Orme-Johnson 1987).

Meditation and Anxiety Disorders: Several studies explored the effect of meditation practice on those suffering from anxiety disorders, which are characterized by an experience of nervousness, tension, psychological stress, and continuing worry—an outcome of the hyperactivity of the autonomic nervous system. We have already referred to some of the early studies. Among the more recent publications, Kabat-Zinn et al. (1992) reported substantial improvement in the condition of participants diagnosed as suffering from generalized anxiety disorder following his Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program. Miller, Fletcher and Kabat-Zinn (1995) investigated 22 patients diagnosed as suffering from anxiety disorders. In a 3-year follow-up study, they found significant improvements in the condition of these outpatient subjects who practiced mindfulness-based stress

reduction meditation as assessed by subjective reports as well as objective symptoms. Teasdale et al. (2000) and Segal et al. (2002), employing Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), a modified version of MBSR, found that their therapy is very effective in helping those suffering from chronic depression, especially preventing relapse.

The evidence that meditation can be used as a remedy for anxiety disorders is not unambiguous. From a review of research Kirkwood et al. (2007) concluded that there is limited evidence with just 4 out of 12 studies showing some improvement in the anxiety condition after practicing meditation. They also found no difference between meditation and other relaxation techniques. A meta-analysis of studies of MBSR by Toneatto and Nguyen (2007) comprising the database of 15 studies found that the evidence for the positive effect of MBSR on anxiety and depression is somewhat equivocal, leading them to conclude that MBSR does not have a reliable beneficial effect on persons suffering from anxiety and depression.

8.3.2 Yoga and Hypertension

Datey et al. (1969) studied the effect of *śavāsana* (lying down posture with awareness of breathing by attending to stomach movements) on hypertensive patients and found that a group of subjects who took no drugs showed a significant decrease in their blood pressure. They also reported that the patients experienced a sense of well-being and improvement in somatic symptoms after practicing *śavāsana* 30 min daily for about 30 weeks.

Benson and associates carried out a number of studies (Benson et al. 1974a, b) to test the effect of transcendental meditation on hypertensive patients. They report that for those patients who practiced meditation, there was a significant decrease in systolic as well as diastolic blood pressure during the experimental period of 20 weeks compared to the control period of 5, 6 weeks when they did not meditate.

A number of experiments to study the effect of meditation on hypertension patients were conducted by Patel (1973, 1975, 1977). In her studies, the subjects practiced *śavāsana*, meditation on breath, muscle relaxation, and a concentrative form of meditation. They also received biofeedback of their GSR through audio signal. The results show that there is significant improvement in blood pressure over a period of 3 months. Settiwar et al. (1983) reported a study in which they found that the neurohumoral substances in urine came very close to normal in 15 of their patients with essential hypertension after 15–20 weeks of yoga treatment.

Working with groups of elderly nursing home residents, Alexander et al. (1989) found decreases in systolic blood pressure following TM compared to groups practicing mindfulness meditation or simple muscle relaxation. Barnes et al. (1999) also reported significant drop in systolic blood pressure following a single session of TM compared to nonmeditating controls.

Canter and Ernst (2005) in their review of five randomized clinical studies that provided cumulative evidence for the positive effect of TM on blood pressure noted

that all the studies were carried out by researches affiliated to the TM organization and that these studies had important methodological weaknesses that could have biased the investigators with TM affiliation. Also, a major review of *Meditation Practices for Health* commissioned by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Sciences in its report on the State of Research (Ospina et al. 2007) referred to earlier concludes: "TM had no advantage over health education to improve measures of systolic blood pressure and diastolic blood pressure, body weight, heart rate, stress, anger, self-efficacy, dietary intake, and level of physical activity in hypertensive patients" (p. 4).

The above report of 2007 notes 21 series of studies of meditation relating to cardiovascular diseases and finds in them no reliable evidence of positive effect of meditation on such diseases.

8.3.3 Other Healing Effects

There are studies that explored the beneficial effects of meditation on healing and possible cure for a variety of diseases ranging from asthama and headaches to cardiovascular disease and immune disfunction.

In a study of 30 physically healthy men, Selvamurty et al. (1983) found that 6 months of yogic exercises resulted in a trend toward relative parasympathetic dominance, improvement in thermoregulatory efficiency, and orthostatic tolerance.

In an exploratory study of 20 patients suffering from migraine and tension headaches, Latha and Kaliappan (1992) divided them into two groups. One group of ten patients received yogic therapy consisting of *āsanas* and breathing exercises while the other group (control) received no such training. They reported significant reduction in headaches, medication intake, and symptoms of the patients in the yoga therapy group.

Sharma et al. (1990) studied the effect of *vipassanā* (*vipaśyanā*) meditation on 10 patients with tension headaches. The patients were assessed on two physiological and three behavioral measures along with a self-report during, before and after 20 daily sessions of meditation. Significant decrease in frontalis muscle tension and reduction in skin conductance after meditation were observed. Also, intensity, frequency, and duration of headaches were reduced. Studies after 5 and 12 months showed that the improvement in the condition of the patient was maintained.

Astin (1997) examined the effects of mindfulness meditation on undergraduate students participating in an 8-week stress reduction program. A comparison of the subjects in the experimental group with control subjects showed the positive effect of meditation leading Astin to conclude that mindfulness is a powerful technique for transforming the ways in which one responds to life events and for preventing the relapse of affective disorders.

Wenneberg et al. (1997) reported that TM may have beneficial effects for those suffering from migraine headaches. It is known that relaxation training can have the

effect of reducing the frequency of headaches by as much as 35–40 %. If meditation helps to create a state of relaxation, we may expect meditation to help reduce migraine headaches. Following this line of thinking, Wachholtz and Pargament (2008) carried out a study comparing four different groups of migraine patients. One group of participants practiced what they call "Spiritual Meditation" and found that the group practicing Spiritual Meditation reported significantly fewer headaches compared to other groups.

A number of studies were carried out in India to study the therapeutic effects of yoga on patients suffering from asthma and other diseases (Bhole 1967, 1982; Bhagwat et al. 1981; Gore 1982; Ganguly 1982; Gharote et al. 1983; Nagarathna and Nagendra 1985, 1986; Manocha et al. 2002). In the study that used randomized control trials, Manocha et al. (2002) report improved condition of patients with practice of Sahaja meditation. Canter (2003) points out, however, that asthma in the patients studied is poorly controlled. Though the results generally show improvements in the condition of the patients, the differences between the experimental and control groups are not maintained after a period of 2 months.

In an editorial to *Student BMJ*, Canter (2003) wrote, "current evidence for the therapeutic effectiveness of any type of meditation is weak…" However, "the limited evidence that does exist and future studies with improved design may yet provide more concrete results that meditation may reduce stress and thus have beneficial effects on health" (p. 177). This appears to be a fair statement of the state of research on the therapeutic effects of meditation.

8.4 What Does It All Mean?

Unlike in other chapters in the book, we have discussed in this chapter empirical research in some detail. This chapter is the only place where the reader finds such extensive discussion of empirical studies and references to statistical significance and hypothesis testing that characterize much of current psychological research. One reason for the extended discussion of empirical research here is to bring home the fact that Indian psychology is not all theory and no data. We believe there is much in Indian psychology that can generate, and some that has actually generated, empirical research. Meditation studies are a case in point. Also, meditation research points to many challenges the researcher in Indian psychology faces and the pitfalls she should keep in perspective and avoid.

What we have attempted is a somewhat cursory review of meditation research. It only touches the periphery of the subject and is intended merely to give a flavor of the topic and its relevance to Indian psychology. We have not attempted to evaluate the quality of the studies or the justification or otherwise of the claims. Admittedly, as Rao (1989) pointed out, much of the earlier literature on meditation is methodologically deficient and conceptually confused. Even though there is indeed evidence suggestive of some effects, there is still a lot of ambiguity and little consensus on what all this means.

In a widely discussed early review of experimental literature on meditation and somatic arousal reduction, Holmes (1984) concluded that across experiments or measures there is no evidence that meditating subjects show lower levels of arousal than resting subjects, and "the most consistent finding was that there were no reliable differences between meditating and resting subjects" (p. 5). Holmes pointed out that the studies fall into three groups: (1) case studies, (2) experiments in which the subjects served as their own controls, and (3) experiments with independent control groups. Case studies, inasmuch as they lack controls, cannot serve as empirical tests of a hypothesis. Experiments in which the same subject served as his or her own control at best provide equivocal evidence. Much of the evidence in support of the hypothesis that meditation lowers somatic arousal comes from experiments with the subjects serving as their own controls. Such evidence, however, is not sufficient to prove that meditation lowers arousal more effectively than simple resting, because the subject's expectations may be critical. Meditators generally believe in the efficacy of meditation over resting, and this may be sufficient to cause the observed differences. Holmes argued that none of the experiments in which proper controls were provided gave evidence that meditation reduces somatic arousal significantly better than resting. He concluded that "not one experiment provided consistent evidence that meditating subjects were less aroused than resting subjects…. Indeed, there does not even appear to be one bad experiment offering consistent evidence that meditation reduces arousal more than sleep" (Holmes 1984, p. 6).

Dillbeck and Orme-Johnson (1987) argued persuasively, however, that the reviews such as those by Holmes do not take into account significant effect size differences between meditation and typical resting conditions. Their own meta-analysis showed that the effect size for TM was almost twice the size found with a simple eyes-closed rest condition across several indicators of reduced somatic arousal. Dillbeck and Orme-Johnson also cite a number of studies such as the one by Warshal (1980) suggesting that TM involves improved reflex response and therefore greater alertness than resting and simple relaxation.

Notwithstanding the publication of numerous studies reporting significant beneficial effects of meditation, greater methodological sophistication and rigor, and improved technology available in recent research, the claims of meditation research continue to be controversial. For example, the report *Meditation Practices for Health: State of the Research* (Ospina et al. 2007) referred to earlier concludes: "Firm conclusions on the effects of meditation practices in healthcare cannot be drawn based on the available evidence. Future research on meditation practices must be more rigorous in the design and execution of studies and in the analysis and reporting of results" (p. v). Even those reviewers, who are favorably disposed toward meditation research and are actively engaged in carrying it, speak only of the promise and the need for future research (Lutz et al. 2007) and not of many firmly established findings.

There are indeed severe methodological problems in several of the meditation studies. These include (1) the widespread practice of the same subject designs in which each subject acts as his own control; (2) the failure to control for individual differences in personality, attitudes, expectations, training, and the duration and

quality of meditation practice of the subjects tested; (3) conceptual confusion leading to (a) a failure to distinguish between meditation as a state and as a technique, (b) lack of adequate criteria to identify a meditative state and scales to measure its quality and depth, and (c) the simplistic notion that sitting cross-legged and chanting a *mantra* is qualitatively the same as the classical discipline of meditation. Further, (4) the meditative techniques employed in research are too numerous and variable to allow general conclusions; (5) the experimental designs are often not appropriate to answer the issues being investigated; and (6) in many studies, especially those using TM, the subjects are self-selected, making the results less generalizable. (7) Finally, it is observed (Canter 2003), when controlled trials were employed they did not control for systematic differences between self-selected subjects and those who are routinely recruited and those subjects who continue to practice and the dropouts who abandon it; (8) experimenter expectations and bias are often not controlled; (9) use of multiple co-interventions confounds relevant variables and makes it almost impossible to trace the source of the observed effect; and (10) there is an inherent difficulty in employing double-blind procedures and controlling subject and experimenter expectancy effects in this area.

The above problems notwithstanding, the widespread interest in meditation has had some useful consequences. First, despite the numerous well-taken criticisms, it is difficult to deny that practice of meditation has certain psychosomatic benefits. The criticism that a meditative state is similar in some respects to a state of drowsiness or sleep does not make meditation any less important. Higher states of consciousness appear to depend on controlling sensory inputs. Meditation does seem to be a useful tool for reducing sensory noise. Second, meditation research is a good example of how a concept once considered esoteric can be empirically studied in a controlled setting. Third, meditation studies open up windows of opportunity to look at Eastern psychological traditions that may have significant implications for research in areas that are currently neglected because there are no useful theoretical models to explore them. And, fourth, meditation research may play a significant role in developing research methods that overcome the first- and third-person divide.

While the overall negative picture of the Ospina et al. (2007) report is not unjustified because of the many apparent methodological pitfalls in published research, we may not ignore the fact that a number of comprehensive meta-analysis do indeed present a somewhat encouraging picture of the state of research. For example, the comprehensive review and meta-analyses of published and unpublished health related research by Grossman et al. (2003) point to a respectable effect size 0.5 with homogeneous distribution suggesting a fairly generalizable positive effect of meditation to cope with problems of clinical and nonclinical nature. Again, Arias et al. (2006) after reviewing what are considered high quality publications found support for "the hypothesis that meditative treatments have a multifaceted effect on psychological as well as biologic function" (p. 828).

A more optimistic outcome of meditation studies emerges from a meta-analysis of 104 methodologically sound studies on the effect of meditation on psychological factors such as cognition, emotion, behavior, and personality by Sedlmeier et al. (2008) to which we referred earlier. They found a mean effect size of $r = 0.29$,

*d = 0.61. Using Cohen's criteria, this implies a "medium" size effect of the procedure on the dimensions studied. A further evaluation along the various factors reveals a consistent moderate size effect: (i) 62 studies examining trait-dependent personality along the positive–negative dimensions such as trait anxiety, neuroticism $r = 0.30$; (ii) 25 studies exploring the effect on state-dependent emotions such as anger, anxiety $r = 0.31$; (iii) 34 studies related to cognition such as field dependence, memory, and concentration tasks, $r = 0.32$; (iv) 19 studies examining the effect of meditation on behavioral aspects such as reaction time, tracking tasks, $r = 0.25$; and (v) 6 studies with intelligence test measures, $r = 0.28$. The only dimension that appears considerably less affected by meditation is that of inherent personality characteristics, which showed a low size effect ($r = 0.14$). A possible explanation for the consistency of effects found may be that the reduction of anxiety/anger and the consequent calming of the mind improve concentration and attention, which is shown in the studies on cognitive and behavioral tasks. As the authors conclude, the effect sizes are comparable to those found in psycho-therapy research, where the effect size range from $d = 0.5$ to $d = 0.8$. Another comprehensive review of meditation states and traits from a neuropsychological perspective by Cahn and Polich (2006) in the *Psychological Bulletin* states that the findings in this area "are becoming more cohesive and directed, even though a comprehensive empirical and theoretical foundation is still emerging. CNS function is clearly affected by meditation, but the specific neural changes and differences among practices are far from clear. The likelihood for clinical utility of meditation practice in conjunction with psychological and neuropharmacological therapies is a strong impetus for future studies" (pp. 202–203).

A great deal of meditation research, as mentioned before, is carried out by researchers involved in or part of TM organization. Some reviewers (Canter 2003) find this as a serious limitation of TM research and the generalizability results. While it would be quite appropriate that meditation research like other research in psychology should find a way of controlling the subject–experimenter expectancy effects, it does not seem right that there should be any attempt to discourage the participation of scientists who practice a certain form of meditation from investigating the effects of meditation they practice. In fact, such experimenters may have significant advantage in carrying out meditation research. One of the main problems of meditation research is the tendency to consider every little effort to focus one's attention on something as meditation. Many forms of currently practised meditation may indeed be no different from relaxation exercises. It is only those who *actually* practise meditation in some depth and understand its nuances at each stage that can meaningfully relate observed behavioral or physiological effects to a true state of meditation.

There is an increasing realization on the part of the researchers that there is more to meditation than the instant meditation practices as represented by such adaptations as TM and Relaxation Response. For example, the work of Lutz et al. (2004)

with long-term Buddhist practitioners suggests that the reports of highly experienced meditators are more likely to be reliable.

The main problem with research as mentioned is one of equating practices of meditation with meditation as such. The results obtained so far are best applicable to practices rather than to meditation per se. The observed effects are the effects of practices and not necessarily effects of meditation as a state. There is need for meaningful discussion on what precisely is the state of meditation. Once we are clear on this, then we may proceed to measure the depth of the state. If the presumed state relates to spiritual advancement it suggests interesting possibilities, including the role of the teacher (*guru*) in assessing it.

Neurophysiological studies of meditation are interesting in many ways. We may expect them to suggest some reliable objective correlates of subjective experience of meditation. This would help meditation research in significant ways by providing measures to understand the depth of meditation independently of the less-reliable subjective reports. This is indeed a relevant issue relating to methodology as well as epistemology. Here issues relating to mind–brain identity theory, which is possibly the most favored in psychophysiological studies, become relevant. However, it is unlikely that the neurophysiological studies would ever completely unlock the secrets of meditation. There are good reasons to think that a profound meditative experience in principle cannot be reduced to certain cortical activation, neurochemical or hormonal changes. The meditator in some ways appears to gain control over the autonomic activity. The simultaneous stimulation of sympathetic and parasympathetic systems, being relaxed and aroused at the same time by the advanced meditators, strongly suggests this. The voluntary control of cerebral activity and autonomic and hormonal changes, if firmly established, could signal significant evidence for noncortical interpretation of volition and eventually the existence of mind and consciousness independent of the brain. However, one could still argue that such voluntary control is due to the self-organizing capabilities of the brain itself.

From the review of neurophysiological investigations of meditation it is clear that so far no clear neurophysiological pattern that could be considered a sort of signature of meditation is found. However, a large number of studies have shown alpha abundance during the period of meditation. This observation is interesting in that meditative practice appears to lead to a relaxed state of mind. However, more interesting are the observations that meditation is not always accompanied by enhanced alpha activity and that in some cases of advanced meditators there is evidence of slow wave EEG activity along with physiological evidence of arousal at the same time. The latter "paradoxical" observation may be interpreted to mean (a) that alpha abundance or any other neurological configuration correlated with meditation may not be intrinsically related to meditation and (b) that meditation somehow enables one to gain volitional control over the autonomic processes and neural mechanisms. The implications of this interpretation of the observed neurophysiological correlates and effects include that the goal of these studies may not be one of discovering such correlates of meditation. Rather the neuroimaging and other physiological studies of meditation may seek to learn how the meditator is able to

gain control over the function of the brain and nervous system. In this connection, the importance of understanding the processes underlying the various forms of attention cannot be over emphasized.

From the psychological perspective, the distracting factors that tend to disturb attentional focus and absorption appear to be equally important. Let us recall that according to Patañjali the quintessential exercises of yoga are aimed at controlling the mental processes. It is all too obvious that the mental processes are to a great extent mediated by the mechanisms of the brain. Therefore, effective cortical control is necessarily associated with yoga practice. Apparently such a control can be achieved by manipulations of attention. Focused attention appears to be a key ingredient. There are several factors that are inimical to such attention. They include psychological states like anxiety, ego indulgence, and craving. In Yoga theory, control of the psychologically distracting states that interfere with one's efforts to concentrate, focus attention and get absorbed in the process rests largely on enlightened knowledge. Therefore, it is said, ignorance is the field that grows the weeds that obstruct proper practice of yoga. There is already some evidence linking meditation to reduced anxiety, which is clearly an attention distracting state. There is, of course, the question whether focused attention helps overcome the hindering distractions or whether proper control of the distractions is a precondition for focused attention.

An important component of *aṣṭāṅga* yoga to which very little attention is paid by researchers in this area involves the moral factor, the *yamas* and *niyamas* in yoga. These are hard to follow, but very easy to ignore. It is very important that researchers begin to take cognizance of this and incorporate them in some form in their research.

Further, *Yoga Sūtras* describe the meditative state as a state of equipoise and mental calmness and emotional tranquility. Therefore, observed correlations between meditative practice and reduction in stress-related ailments fit with the implications of Yoga theory. Patañjali believed that yogins have access to new ways of knowing and that they gain extraordinary cognitive and transcognitive abilities. Again, there is suggestive evidence from parapsychological studies for this possibility. The goal of yoga, however, is not acquiring these abilities but to reach a state of *kaivalya.* In its most generalized sense, *kaivalya* refers to the freedom of the person to have a truly authentic experience which consists in knowing things the way they really are without any prejudice, preconception, or bias.

Most of the studies of meditation are with persons with very modest proficiency in meditation. There are, however, a few where very adept meditators are studied. Also, there are a variety of practices that go in the name of meditation. Some of them may not be considered as meditation at all. In order to control for possible differential effects, reviews of meditation research would do well to separate them. This may not solve the problem entirely, however. What are crucial in meditation research are not the practices one is engaged in but the states of mind produced by these practices. Again, there may be no single state that characterizes all of meditation. There are more likely a series of states as recognized in Patañjali Yoga and Buddhist

meditation. Therefore, meditation research in future should focus on the different meditative states as implied, for example, in *samprajñātā* and *asamprajñāta samādhi* in Patañjali's yoga and the different *jhāna* states described by Buddhaghoṣa. However, there is the problem of finding suitable subjects who have the experience of such states and are able to enter into them in a test situation. Further, even if we can find a few who actually illustrate the higher states of *samādhi*, it is quite unlikely that they would be willing to be subjects for study. These are very difficult and real problems that may not be wished away.

Along side empirical research, there is need for theoretical discussions that bring clarity to the field, largely conflated by the wide variety of practices that go in the name of meditation and an equally bizarre array of states attributed to meditation. What is clear, however, is the fact that a single set of practices does not constitute meditation and that meditation may not be identified with a unique neurophysiological state or a distinctive psychological condition. At the same time, we find a running thread connecting what appear to be disparate aspects/effects of meditation ranging from relaxation and stress reduction to acquisition of extraordinary abilities and total transformation of the person. Volitional deployment of attention appears to lead to voluntary control of brain-states and autonomic functions, which in return result in cognitive excellence. Cognitive excellence may be seen in unbiased observations, skilled subjective awareness, enhanced access to the unconscious information and unfolding of hidden human potentials. More importantly, meditation at its deeper levels leads to an altered state of consciousness (*samādhi*) enabling the meditator to have transcognitive experience.

The review of the meditation literature and the above discussion clearly show how meditation research may benefit by understanding meditation from the perspective of Indian psychology. Indian psychology, Yoga as well as Buddhist, offers several significant models to understand meditation and useful theories to organize and conduct empirical research on meditation. Further, nearly all the research we reviewed here is with meditation type of yoga. As we noted in the beginning of this chapter, there are other yogas like *bhakti* yoga and *karma* yoga. Research on the effects of nonmeditative yogas is also warranted. There are already some studies showing that altruistic attitudes have certain beneficial effects on health and wellness. Altruism is central to *karma yoga*. Theoretical studies of *karma yoga* are likely to provide interesting hypothesis to test. Again, *bhakti yoga* can be another mine for psychologists to explore. The goal of all kinds of yoga is *self-realization*. Altruism is indeed a natural result of self-realization; but clearly it may not be sufficient to bring about self-realization. *Self-realization* is the goal to reach, the ideal to be realized. In practical life and actual research, however, what we may be dealing with are characteristics merely indicative of things like altruism.

Chapter 9
Self-realization: Illustrative Case Studies

The historical development of Indian psychology is different in significant respects from academic psychology as it has grown in the West and spread around the world. Indian psychology with its origins in classical Indian thought has been revived generation after generation by great men who have interpreted old ideas in changing circumstances and demonstrated their application in their own lives. Indian psychology is essentially practical in nature; its principles provide guidelines for action. As noted toward the end of Chap. 6, Indian tradition recognizes two basic styles in applying the principles in practice: while one emphasizes remaining in family and social life (called the *pravṛtti mārga*), the other involves renunciation of life in family and society and exclusively focusing on self-realization (*nivṛtti mārga*). Yet, another approach emphasizes *bhakti* and celestial love in seeking self-realization. In this chapter we shall describe one example each of the three styles. First we will see how B.G. Tilak, who like Gandhi after him, became deeply involved with India's struggle for freedom against the British Empire while continuing on his own spiritual path. A noted scholar of Indian and Western thought, he presented a detailed interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gītā* within the combined context of Indian and Western philosophy and world views. His focus was mainly on the principles and practice of *karma yoga*. The second illustrative case of interest is that of Tukārāma who practised the path of devotion, celestial love. The third case is that of Sri Ramaṇa, who dropped out of family life and attained self-realization following the principles of *jñāna yoga* or the path of knowledge. In the remainder of this chapter we first present sketches of the life histories of Tilak, Tukārāma, and Sri Ramaṇa, then explain their respective concepts and practices, and finally analyze their approaches in light of the account of major forms of yoga, namely *dhyāna-, jñāna-, bhakti-, and karma-yoga* presented in the earlier chapters of this book.

Before turning to the three case studies it would be useful to make a note on methodology. Case study has been a common method for conveying psychological knowledge; Freud's account of Anna O, Little Hans, Wolf Man, and others have been classic examples. Each one of these illustrates prototypical symptomatology of distinctive forms of pathology. However, outside the field of psychopathology, case studies are rarely used in modern psychology. The main reason for their

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unpopularity seems to indicate the emphasis in the "science" of psychology on generalization, which is singularly lacking in accounts of unique individuals. Intensive and longitudinal studies of single individuals in the field of "personology" which focuses the on the entire life of a person as a single whole (see White 1966) is one of the two exceptions. The other example is psycho-historical studies by Erikson (1958/1962, 1969) of exceptional individuals such as Martin Luther, the founder of Protestant Christianity, and Mahatma Gandhi the "Father" of modern Indian nation. Allport (1966), who was close to White and Erikson, discussed some methodological issues in the use of personal documents such as letters and autobiographies in the study of single individuals. However, the further development of such methodological guidelines is shadowed by the still proliferating development of psychometric methodologies in modern psychology.

To the extent that the case studies presented in this and the next chapter are well-known historical figures, the current approach is somewhat similar to Erikson's psychohistorical approach. Like Erikson's studies, ours focus on exceptional historical figures, and to some extent they indicate what Erikson calls the "complementarity of history and life history." In other words, in the understanding of the long life histories of such persons, it is inevitable to see the interwoven nature of events of their lives with some landmark events in the history of their societies. In examining the lives of Tilak and Gandhi, in particular, it is interesting to see how the history of India during the British Raj shaped their lives even as their work helped make the history of modern India. Erikson's (1969) interpretation of Gandhi's life makes this point clear as does our account of Gandhi in the next chapter. Regardless of such similarity, however, our approach here is significantly different from Erikson's. First, while Erikson adopts mainly a psychoanalytical approach, we do not. Consistent with our emphasis on the way in which Indian ethos has shaped Indian thought, our study of Gandhi emphasizes how he brought spirituality in social affairs even as Indian psychology focuses on spirituality. The three case studies presented in the remainder of this chapter illustrate the way in which the lives of individuals were shaped through the successful practice of the three major pathways to spiritual development, namely *karma-*, *bhakti-*, and *jñāna-yoga*. More specifically, our attempt here is to examine the life of these individuals in light of the concepts and theories of Indian psychology specific to the very pathways which they followed.

9.1 B.G. Tilak: A Modern Interpreter and Practitioner of Karma Yoga

Tilak (1856–1920) was one of the great leaders of India who preceded Gandhi in the struggle for independence. He used primarily his writings as a journalist against the British Empire to arouse patriotic feelings among his countrymen. His remarkable success in this endeavor earned him the epithet "Father of the Indian Unrest" at the hands of a British journalist Sir Valentine Chirol. *Lokamānya*, which

literally means "respected by people," was a title by which he became widely known just as his junior Mohandas Gandhi became known by the title Mahatma, meaning a great soul.

Tilak[1] was born on July 23, 1856 in the coastal region south of Mumbai. Since early childhood, he distinguished himself as a very bright student. He started his career as a mathematics teacher in New English School that he founded along with his friends. Soon after this, he established the Fergusson College, where he taught mathematics and Sanskrit. He did not continue there for long due to differences of opinion with his colleagues. Following his resignation there, Tilak started private classes to train would-be lawyers, and earned a reputation for his expertise in law. He then started two newspapers, *Kesarī* in Marathi, his native language, and *Mahratta* in English. Using these as his base, he started a number of public activities, all geared to arouse public opinion against the injustices of the imperial government, and to inculcate intense patriotic feelings among the people.

The first one among the activities which Tilak initiated was the public and collective celebration of the annual festival of god Gaṇeśa, which was up till then normally celebrated as a family affair. As expected, this public celebration brought Hindus of all castes and creeds together. However, it was sometimes viewed as a way of uniting the Hindus against the Muslims, who were perceived as finding excuses to start riots against the Hindus with the tacit support of the British government. Another such activity promoted by Tilak was the public celebration of the birth anniversary of Chatrapati Shivaji, a seventeenth century ruler and hero who turned the tide of the Mughal rule in the southern parts of India. Both celebrations continue till this day as highly popular public events particularly in Maharashtra, the Marathi speaking region of Western India. Moving gradually from local and provincial to the national level, Tilak joined the Indian National Congress in 1889, and soon gained national prominence as one of its most influential leaders. Within the Congress he distinguished himself as a radical in contrast with influential moderate leaders such as Ranade, Gokhale, Sir Pherozshah Mehta, and others. While the moderates believed in petitioning the government for participation in local self-government and other such rights, Tilak proclaimed that complete political independence was the birthright of every citizen,[2] just as liberation (*mokṣa*) was the natural goal for every soul. Small wonder then that he ran foul with the British government, and suffered repeated imprisonment.

In trying to control the plague epidemic of 1897, the British government used excessive police force to drive people out of their homes in the city of Pune to

[1]The 1956 printing of the 10th edition of the Tilak's original Marathi work is used here as basic reference in writing this chapter. More recent edition is deliberately avoided since it has too many typographical errors. Translations in many Indian languages have been published; for an English translation see Tilak (1971). *Srimad Bhavadgītā-Rahasya or Karma-Yoga-Sastra* (B.S. Sukthankar, Trans., 3rd edn.). Pune: Tilak Brothers.

[2]Tilak once said that independence is his birth right, and he WILL win it. This is a translation of his words in Marathi: "*swarājya hā mazā janmasiddha hakka āhe, āṇi to mī miḷvaṇārac.*" These words became the very symbol of Tilak.

quarantined areas out of the city. There were several instances of desecration of idols in homes, theft of property, and allegations of dishonoring women. As a result, there was widespread fear and rage against the police rule. In response, Chaphekar brothers assassinated the police chief named Rand, who was in charge of plague control activities. Pro-Government newspapers started innuendo suggesting Tilak's involvement in the plot to assassinate Rand. Tilak continued writing articles denouncing police atrocities. Thus, the title of one of his articles was "Has the government lost its sense?"[3] (Kelkar 1928/1988, Vol. 1, p. 544). Such strong words and relentless complaints against oppressive bureaucrats added fuel to the fire, and the government took Tilak to the court on the serious charge of sedition. While citing his commendable work in assisting the people while settling in quarantines outside the city, and in providing them medical help as reasons for his leniency, the judge sentenced Tilak for 18 months of hard labor. This was the first time, in 1897, that he was sentenced on charges of sedition.

The substandard food and other conditions of the prison took a toll on Tilak's health. However, with the intervention of Indian and European intellectuals, Tilak was given some limited facilities such as the use of books and an oil lamp for reading in the night. He used these facilities to read Max Müller's edition of the Vedas. While reading it, he stumbled over a reference to a 2-month-long night before daybreak mentioned in the Vedas. This reference led him to infer that the Vedic Aryans lived near the North Pole where days and nights are very long in the summer and winter seasons respectively. He developed this theme in a scholarly work called the *Arctic Home in the Vedas*. This work earned him the reputation as a scholar, which is remarkable given that he continued his studies despite being heavily involved in political and social life.

Another important episode in Tilak's life began after Lord Curzon decided to adopt the highly unpopular policy of the partition of the province of Bengal. Tilak wrote some articles in *Kesarī* in which he drew parallels between the situation in Bengal and the Czarist tyranny in Russia. One of his articles titled "These remedies are not lasting" suggested that the right solution to avoid people's rage against the British bureaucracy was to start granting them important rights of self-rule. Another article titled "Misfortune of this country" (*deśāce durdaiva*) published in May 1908 raised further alarm (Kelkar 1928/1988, Vol. 2, Sect. 8, p. 6). The Governor of Bombay Sir George Clarke (later Lord Sydenham) found Tilak's articles objectionable, and charged him of exciting disloyalty and hatred against the Emperor and the Government of India (Tamhankar 1956, p. 176). Tilak's defense lawyer in the ensuing case was Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah (later recognized as the father of the nation of Pakistan). Although Jinnah skillfully presented his client's case, Tilak deliberately avoided speaking on the fine points of law that could have helped him get off the hook. Instead, he used his speech to try to demonstrate that it was the Anglo-Indian press that was hurting the feelings of the masses and thereby inciting

[3]It is difficult to convey the stinging sense of the original Marathi words, which were: "*sarkārce ḍoke ṭhikāṇāvar āhe kāya*?"

them against the Government (Phatak 1972/1999, p. 279). In other words, Tilak used his trial as an opportunity for propaganda against the British, rather than trying to save himself from the clutches of the law. When asked to make a final statement before sentencing, Tilak famously uttered the following words with courage and unshaken confidence:

> All I wish to say is that, in spite of the verdict of the jury, I maintain that I am innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destiny of things, and, it may be the will of Providence that the cause I represent may prosper more by my suffering than by my remaining free. (Karandikar 1957, p. 322)

In any case, the court sentenced Tilak to 6 years of "transportation"—a euphemism for exile from his country—and sent him to a jail in Mandaly in Burma, now called Myanmar. People expected and resented such treatment of their popular leader at the hand of the government; and there was widespread public unrest in the city of Mumbai in anticipation of a negative verdict. As the case was drawing to a close, over 35,000 workers from a couple of dozen mills in Mumbai went on strike. This strike, along with widespread public support of the strikers, firmly established Tilak's reputation as a leader of the masses. In any case, the court sentenced Tilak to 6 years of imprisonment in Burma. Although he was given some special privileges in the jail, such as having a convict from his province to cook his meals, the weather was very hot, muggy and dusty, and the overall conditions of the jail were injurious to health. It is during these days in prison that Tilak (1915/1956) wrote the manuscript of a book titled *Gītārahasya*, a scholarly commentary on the *Bhagavad Gītā* aimed at explaining its secret (*rahasya*), or essence. It is in this work that he interprets the basic principles of Karma Yoga.

Though engaged in national affairs, Tilak remained closely involved in local life. His house always remained open; people from all walks of life walked into his house for help at anytime without prior appointments, as was common in those days. Given his great reputation for knowledge of law, it was most common for visitors to ask him for advice on how to proceed with legal cases in which they were involved. Tilak also had a large circle of friends who sought his advice and help in various personal matters. In trying to help one of his close friends Tilak landed into a major headache for over two decades. This was a significant chapter in his life, and deserves a brief account here.

A close friend by the name of Baba Maharaj asked Tilak for a personal favor: to look after the interests of his estate as it would be passed down after his death to his young wife, Tai Maharaj, who was pregnant, during his last days. Baba Maharaj's special request was to find his widow an adoptee son in case she fails to give birth to a male child, or if her son dies young. Tilak agreed to be a trustee of the widow's estate. When Tai Maharaj's son died an infant death, Tilak helped her in finding a suitable male child from a family of blood relations, and formally adopt him in accordance with the local tradition and legal provisions. However, eying on her big estate, one of the trustees named Nagpurkar tried to get the adoption annulled in favor of a boy of his choice. Under Nagpurkar's influence, the young widow, Tai Maharaj, filed a court case against Tilak and other trustees alleging irregularities in

regard to adoption. Nagpurkar found great support from Aston, a British district officer, who was trying to find excuses to implicate Tilak, a thorn on the side of the government. The result was a series of very serious trumped-up criminal charges, including unlawful confinement of Tai Maharaj in her residence, unlawful assembly around the residence, persecution of Nagpurkar and Tai Maharaj, preparing forged documents, and deceit. Tilak's detractors colluded with British officers to drag him in protracted court cases. Innuendos about alleged relationship with a young widow would be major headache to any self-respecting man, and for a man like Tilak deeply involved in public life was even more so. To make a long story short, after over two decades of court cases, Tilak finally came out totally blameless in this matter.

9.1.1 The Background and Motivation for Writing the Gītārahasya

At the first blush, reading a biography of Tilak might give the impression that he was simply a great patriot, freedom fighter and an astute politician. The connection between his politics and his philosophy of *karma yoga* would appear to be tenuous. In the remainder of this chapter we shall first provide a brief summary of Tilak's views of *karma yoga*, and then see how he translated them into practice in his own life.

Tilak's views about *karma yoga* are based on the Doctrine of Karma, a foundational thesis of the Indian culture, which we discussed earlier in Chap. 2 of this book. His views were informed by a deep and careful study of the tradition, and offer an elaborate re-interpretation of the doctrine suitable to the context of modern times. *Karma*, as noted earlier, refers to intentional action, and the Doctrine of Karma and that of *karma yoga* essentially involve a perspective on how one should behave in varied circumstances throughout life. In other words, the principles of *karma yoga* involve a perspective on ethics. Indeed, at the top of the title page of the original Marathi edition of the *Gītārahasya* appears a line saying "The Hindu Philosophy of Life, Ethics and Religion" which succinctly presents the main theme of the work. In his introduction to *Gītārahasya* Tilak mentions (on page 14 of the Marathi edition) that, given the assumption prompted by the advance of natural sciences in the West that the traditional wisdom is not applicable to current times, he had given parallel references to Western concepts, where appropriate, to show how the principles are ahistorical but not obsolete. He mainly points out that the doctrines of Indian thought in the fields of spirituality and ethics are beyond the pale of the natural sciences, and that they are no less sophisticated than their Western counterparts. In that context, he scoured Western thought from Aristotle and Kant and through Darwin, Spencer and John Stuart Mill, pointing out both the similarities and differences among them. Indeed, Tilak's comparisons of Western and Indian viewpoints, and his defense of the latter, involve a major contribution to the history of Indian intellectual tradition.

Reflecting on the many traditional interpretations of the *Gītā*, Tilak (p. 12) specifically notes that he does not agree with those interpretations that stress either the knowledge of the Self (*brahma-jñāna*), or devotion (*bhakti*) as the *only* means to liberation. His main contention in this regard was that, insofar as the paths of self-knowledge and devotion often tend to encourage keeping away from social involvement, *Gītā*'s teachings in favor of social involvement must be emphasized. Granting that self-knowledge and devotion are *also* propounded by the *Gītā* as means to liberation (*mokṣa*), he insists that, in his opinion, what the *Gītā* mainly advocates is action (karma) founded on self-knowledge (*jñāna-mūlaka*) and guided by devotion. Before ending his introductory remarks Tilak clarifies that the *Gītā* is not a treatise meant for the leisurely perusal of old folks in their retirement years, but a guide for youth for living a meaningful life which lies ahead for them. Regardless of the depth and extent of scholarship evinced throughout the *Gītārahasya*, his work is not simply an intellectual exercise undertaken by an academic living in an ivory tower. Rather, it reflects the distinctive character of Indian philosophy and psychology where knowledge is to function as a guide for practical life, and not as idle speculation or empty theorizing.

Here we shall first briefly explain the basic concepts of *karma yoga* as interpreted by Tilak and then proceed to discuss how he brought its teachings into his own life.

9.1.2 An Outline of Tilak's View of Karma Yoga

As noted in Chap. 2, according to the Doctrine of Karma, every action leaves behind its trace (*saṁskāra*), and such traces are "stored," so to speak, till they lead to appropriate consequences or "fruits" (*phala*)—even as plant seeds can be stored and may sprout under suitable conditions and eventually bear fruit. The consequences resulting from stored traces may be in the form of enjoyment or suffering depending on the good or bad nature of the original action. Also the traces tend to prompt actions similar to the original actions if the original actions were pleasurable —an idea which resembles the behaviorist notion of reinforcement. In the process of the prompting of action as a result of earlier actions, new experiences accrue, which prompt new actions in response, thus perpetuating an unending chain of consequences. Thus, new traces keep on *accumulating* even as some of the old traces "fructify" and thus get dropped off from the storehouse. According to the Indian tradition, one's actions thus "bind" an individual to an unending chain of consequences. Becoming liberated from such "bondage" constitutes liberation or *mokṣa*—the *summum bonum* of life as envisioned in most schools of Indian thought. While addressing the problem of escaping from the cumulative and continuing effects of past action, Tilak first explains the concepts relating to the storehouse of accumulated traces (called *saṁcita*). The portion of the stored traces that may have begun (*prārabdha*) to be translated into appropriate consequences sets in motion a process that is unstoppable like the arrow released from the bow.

The consequences that are "in the pipeline," so to speak, must be endured, whether one likes them or not. Under such conditions, there is not much sense in either rejoicing the likable consequences, or fretting over the painful ones. One is not, however, helpless in regard to the stored traces that have not yet begun (*anārabdha*) to fructify. The problem therefore involves the question as to what one can do best to avoid the negative consequences of past actions that await manifestation in one's life in the future. This is not of course a new problem; there are different perspectives and solutions suggested by various schools of Indian thought. Tilak identifies the major perspectives and critically examines and criticizes them before suggesting his own.

The *first* perspective which Tilak examines in this context is that of the Pūrva Mīmāṁsā School, which is based on the Vedas, and is explained primarily by its great proponent Jaimini. Jaimini opens his aphorisms declaring that his aim is to inquire into the nature of *dharma*, meaning duties, and seeks answers in the Vedic commandments. Even a cursory look into the Vedas, particularly the *Ṛg Veda* and the *Yajur Veda*, makes it clear that the hymns of the sages were focused on sacrificial rituals aimed at propitiating gods so that they would provide the worshipper with prosperity in this world and pleasures in heaven in life after death. While some rituals prescribed by the Vedas are supposed to be performed every day, such as the evening prayer (*sandhyā*), others are appropriate for specific occasions such as death anniversaries (*śrāddha*) of ancestors. Still others are recommended for fulfilling special desires (*kāmya karma*), such as birth of a son in this life, or a place in the heaven in afterlife. Texts such as the *Brāhmaṇa*s describe how to perform various rituals in great detail. Performing them as per prescription was thought to naturally produce powers (called the *adṛṣṭa*, literally meaning unseen) that would automatically lead to appropriate consequences, good or bad—even as the karmic traces were supposed to produce—under the right conditions. If, as is presumed by the Doctrine of Karma, both good as well as bad consequences of past action are inevitable, how could one avoid them and set oneself free from their bondage? To this question the Mīmāṁsā thinkers gave a simple answer: Perform all the actions that are prescribed or ordered for us to do, and avoid doing what we are not supposed to do, and thereby stop accumulating demerit to what is already in store. This implies that, in the context of the Vedic injunctions, one must perform all the actions prescribed for every day (*nitya karma*), such as evening prayers, as well as those prescribed for specific occasions (*naimittika karma*), such as rituals to follow death in the family. In addition, one must *avoid* all actions proscribed by the rules, such as theft or killing, and thereby prevent further addition to the accumulating fund of demerits. Interestingly, they also suggested that one should avoid performing sacrificial rituals intended to produce specially desired results (*kāmya karma*), such as getting rains, wealth, or progeny in this life or obtaining pleasures of heaven thereafter. The purpose of this latter strategy is to avoid accumulating merit points, and thereby prevent being born again to reap rewards that may not be enjoyed in the present life cycle.

Tilak (1915/1956, pp. 260–261) criticized this strategy suggested by the Mīmāṁsā system on various grounds. First, he notes, new actions and their impressions arise incessantly in the very fact of living, and complex situations arise

where avoiding bad actions is not always possible. Murky situations of daily life often present complex moral challenges that often produce actions and their results that are neither completely meritorious nor the exact opposite. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to exhaust the mixed bag of good and bad consequences at *precisely the same point in time,* and thereby attain a *sudden* release. All these are apparently intractable *logical* difficulties with the Mīmāṁsā's rationale for sacrificial rituals as means to liberation. Further, Tilak points out the historical changes in the Vedic religion that makes the practice of its prescribed rituals impracticable, irrelevant or redundant. The tradition of sacrificial rituals described in the Vedas had already eroded under the influence of Buddhist opposition to animal sacrifices and other historical circumstances. Writing in early twentieth century, Tilak (1915/1956, pp. 276–277) notes that the ancient Vedic practices are no longer in vogue as a result of the then prevailing life styles. Thus, the once common traditional rituals such as the performance of *sandhyā vandanam* every evening was no longer common in his days, and more such practices were on the way out. Instead of defending for their restoration, Tilak pointed out that the ancient Vedic view of *yajña* as rituals propitiating gods such as Indra or Agni were misleading, and drew attention to other more correct interpretations. In this context he cites the views of Manu in *Manusmṛti* (see Tilak 1915/1956, p. 277) whereby performing *yajña* is said to involve the repaying of various kinds of debts each person is expected to pay back: debt to the sages by learning the scriptures, to the ancestors by the continuation of lineage through producing progeny, to animals by feeding them, and to humans by making sure that no person in the vicinity stays hungry. Viewed this way, *yajña* or worship involves *giving*. He cites in this context the views of the *Īśa Upaniṣad* which says that everything of earth belongs to the Lord, eating without fulfilling obligations for others amounts to theft, and is thus sinful. Tilak clarifies that this kind of worship through fulfilling ones obligations and giving is not recommended for Brahmins alone but for members of all castes.

Since, as noted above, it is virtually impossible to bring the balance sheet of merit versus sin to an exact zero at one and the same time, the tradition has suggested an alternative: "burning the seeds of karma" through self-knowledge so as to render the entire storehouse of past karma impotent in one single stroke. Tilak carefully examines this, the *second* traditional view of attaining *mokṣa*. It is neither necessary nor possible to provide a detailed account of Tilak's explanation of the burning of the seeds of karma, but a brief interpretation of the same should be in order. To put it in the idiom of contemporary psychology originating from James (1890/1983), knowledge in this context involves the direct experience of the self-as-subject in a higher state of consciousness. According to the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, the true Self is revealed in the Fourth State of consciousness, which is devoid of content, and it may be attained through an intense critical examination of the nature of Self (*Ātman*) as recommended in the literature on AdvaitaVedānta. As explained in Chap. 6, such examination is a form of meditation involving a sustained cognitive exercise which renders common images of the self-as-object transparent, thereby revealing the Self as an unchanging center of awareness. Eventually the meditator recognizes that the ego, which is normally identified with the continually changing images of the self in

terms of one's beliefs, actions and feelings, has only a functional value in daily life and nothing more. Such realization helps the person to completely overcome the ego and is freed from one's egoistic strivings. In a manner of speaking, the ego is dissolved through a form of cognitive deconstruction. Thus, there is no ego to perpetuate itself through a continuous flow of striving for something or other. While behaving normally in daily life, a *self-realized* person overcomes all desires and remains unaffected whatever the consequences of her actions—whether the actions are of the past or present. It is the ego with its investment in ongoing beliefs and attendant emotions and actions that enjoys and suffers. The *self-realized* person, however, is anchored in the unchanging Self at the center of awareness, and this Self transcends the ego and thus remains immune from the ups and downs in daily life that normally leads to the see-saw of emotional life. Such a person does not lose the use of the powers to think, feel, and act, but remains a mere witness of ongoing events. She lives life in the normal mode, she is *in* the society but not *of* it; like a lotus leaf that is in water but untouched by it.

Tilak's explanation of burning the seeds of past karma through self-knowledge is essentially an interpretation—and also an open advocacy—of the path of knowledge (*jñāna mārga*) in the Advaita system of Śaṅkara and his followers. Nevertheless, he was severely criticized by a staunch follower of Śaṅkara called Vishnu Vaman Bapat (1914) immediately after the publication of a preview of the *Gītārahasya*. Bapat's point was that, according to Śaṅkara, knowledge of the Self is *the* only means to the attainment of liberation or *mokṣa*. (The often quoted expression expressing this idea is *jñānādeva tu kaivalyam*). Tilak's advocacy of the superiority of *karma yoga,* according to Bapat, is not only a serious deviation from Śaṅkara's teachings, but also a misinterpretation of the *Gītā*. Bapat's strong words of public criticism led to serious debates between Tilak and other critics like Bapat.[4] Tilak's position, like that of some other thinkers in Śaṅkara's tradition, advocates a judicious combination of aspects of *jñāna yoga* and *karma yoga* (*jñāna-karma-smuccaya*).[5] Here it is important to note that Tilak repeatedly spoke of doing one's karma after the attainment of self-knowledge (*jñānottara karma*). This can be confusing if by this it is meant that Tilak's recommendation of *karma yoga* is meant for self-realized persons. A *self-realized* person is believed to have totally overcome her ego, and such a person's actions are natural and spontaneous; she does not need constant deliberation on the morality of the course of action to follow. If this is correct, what was the relevance of Tilak's extensive action how one should behave *after* attaining self-knowledge?

In this context it may be argued that what Tilak means by self-knowledge is an *intellectual conviction* about the true nature of the Self, and not the attainment of the

[4]Phatak (1999, pp. 356–362) gives an interesting account of the activities of the critics of Tilak's his *Gītārahasya* that often led to ludicrous arguments and hilarious situations.

[5]On page 341 of the 7th Marathi edition of his *Gītārahasya* Tilak (1915/1956) explicitly speaks of the superiority of the combination of *jñāna* and karma (*jñāna-karma-samuccaya*), and explains in fair detail the superiority of continuing to act in the interest of society after attaining self-knowledge rather than relinquishing social involvement.

highest level of enlightenment which it eventually leads to. As noted in Chap. 6, according to the Advaita system, an aspirant would have to go through three successive steps in one's spiritual pursuit: *first*, the study of the principles of Advaita philosophy (*śravaṇa*) that the true Self is beyond one's beliefs, intentions for action, or feelings; *second*, a relentless critical examination (*manana*) of the principles so as to clear one's mind all objections and doubts so as to arrive at the intellectual conviction about the verity of the principles. Even after arriving at an intellectual conviction, there remains a *third* stage (*nididhyāsana*) during which the understanding thus attained becomes totally ingrained and completely natural. In speaking of karma *after* self-realization, Tilak was, arguably, trying to explain what course of action one may follow after one attains an intellectual conviction about the true nature of the Self. There has been a debate in the history of Advaita school of thought as to whether *mokṣa* is attained instantaneously upon clearly understanding the principles, or if there is a gradual process which leads to the final goal. Tilak seems to advocate a form of *karma yoga* that gradually leads to *mokṣa*, which is reflected in his use of the term *krama mukti* as this step-by-step progress is called.

Notwithstanding his agreement with the fundamental principles of Advaita, Tilak differs with Śaṅkara and many of his followers on one point: while they recommend renunciation or "dropping out of society" (*saṅnyāsa*) before as well as after *self-realization*, Tilak prefers continued social involvement before as well as after *self-realization*. There are several examples of persons who were *self-realized*, such as the sage Yājñavalkya and king Janaka mentioned in the Upaniṣads, who had not become monks, and played active roles in family and wider society. Tilak (1915/1956, p. 324) argued that renunciation is recommended for the fourth stage of life (*saṅnyāsa*) in old age after one has done one's duties as a student in the first stage childhood and youth (*bhrahmacarya*), as a householder (*gṛhastha*) in the second stage, preparing for retirement (*vānaprastha*) in the third stage. Of these stages, the stage of householder is often considered the most important, he points out, since productive work done by people in this stage sustains people in all other stages. It would be a disaster, he suggests, if too many people skip this stage and become renunciates to devote full time for spiritual self-development. Moreover, he refers to the *Gītā* (3.20) and numerous other texts to show how time and again the tradition has emphasized the value of working to sustain the cohesive coexistence of people in a society (*lokasaṅgraha*). Tilak emphasizes the importance for all people to behave in such a way as to contribute to social cohesion, including those who have attained *self-realization*. Indeed, he suggests, it is even more incumbent for the enlightened person to be pro-social and not turn a monk and become parasitically dependent on others for their physical sustenance.

We may pause here to recognize that Tilak's emphasis on the importance of social involvement reflects its relevance during his times, when fighting against a foreign rule was a crucial factor. A religion teaching the importance of renunciation was hardly relevant under the circumstances, and as a social reformer Tilak gave a strong message to his compatriots in this regard. That he appears to have tried to advise even the *self-realized*—who need no instruction—seems odd, even audacious. But here let us leave aside the question as to whether Tilak was overstepping his boundaries.

Instead, let us briefly examine the strategy of *karma yoga* suggested by Tilak, and see how it may lead to a gradual progress toward *mokṣa*.

The common label that describes his strategy is "*niṣkāma karma*; and the *kāma* part of this expression literally means desire. Indeed, it does not make sense to think of "*niṣkāma*" karma as action *without* any desire whatsoever; indeed, actions would be random and meaningless unless they are directed toward some essentially desirable outcome. What one should give up is not desire, Tilak suggests, but covetousness or hankering for desired outcomes. He prefers the term *anāsakti*, meaning lack of excessive attachment or craving for desired results. The Marathi word he uses is *hāṅv*, meaning hankering which, he suggests, should be given up or at least gradually reduced. To put it in other words, one should cultivate a sense of detachment or dispassionateness. Gradually, with practice, the sense of dispassionateness would grow stronger and eventually lead to a totally detached state. Thus, Tilak's main advice is to continue following a course of action guided by one's conscience with a consistent effort to control and reduce one's level of ego-involvement.

9.1.3 The Emotional and Cognitive Elements in Karma

It should be clear that hankering is a matter of passion, it implies a deeply emotional involvement in intended results of one's actions. *Karma yoga* is, first of all, a matter of *volition*, or rather, a matter of properly directing one's actions. The direction is chosen on the basis of thinking in terms of assessing how far one's actions may have contributed to the result, and how much one should reasonably expect in return. Such thinking is clearly a *cognitive* activity as well. By insisting that *karma yoga* should be undertaken after attaining self-knowledge, Tilak explicitly involves a most crucial element of *jñāna mārga* in his approach. A close look at Tilak's biography would indicate that *bhakti*, which demands strong emotional involvement with God (whether in some form of love or even intense hate or fear), was part of his engagement with the world. That he encouraged collective worship of Gaṇeśa is an indication of Tilak's inclination toward *bhakti*. However as noted by Phatak (1972/1999, p. 439), Tilak did not think much of religious rituals. Kelkar, who was a close colleague of Tilak and lived next door to him, has noted that worship or prayer were not regular part of Tilak's daily routine.[6] Regardless of such observations that are suggestive of the marginal place of *bhakti* in the life of Tilak, there is an interesting observation that indicates otherwise. In his article on the occasion of Tilak's birth centenary, Divekar (1956) makes some interesting observations regarding the place of *bhakti* in Tilak's life. In Divekar's view, there comes a point in the life of every person, whether he is inclined to be a *karma-yogin, jñāna-yogin, or* a *bhakti-yogin*, when he totally surrenders to God. Divekar suggests that Tilak's

[6]See Kelkar (1928/1998), Vol. 3, Sect. 9, pp. 34–35.

views about *bhakti* were rightly expressed in the *Gītārahasya* where he advocates performing action without egotism, without hankering for rewards, and with total faith in God. As we noted above, Tilak had made a reference to the will of Providence in his famous words upon being sentenced to 6 years of exile in Mandalay. That was in 1908, when Tilak was 52 years old. Divekar points out that in the speeches Tilak made in his last lecture tour in support of the Home Rule League, there are frequent references to God's Will. That was in 1916 when Tilak was 60 years old, which was in those days taken as the beginning of old age. To put in other words, Tilak's attitude of surrender to God's will apparently was intensified toward the end of his life.

It would be useful to note another aspect of Tilak's spiritual life here. Kulkarni, who was a convict assigned to cook for Tilak during his incarceration in the prison in Mandalay wrote his reminiscences of prison life. In it he mentions that it was Tilak's daily practice to sit in his bed after waking up every morning for about one and one half hour—apparently absorbed in deep meditation (Tilak and Dhavale 1992, p. 78). It would appear that the prison life gave Tilak the leisure and facility to practice meditation in a way his busy life at home may not have. At any rate, Kulkarni's eye witness account indicates that he combined the concentrative meditation of *dhyāna* yoga in addition to elements of *jñāna* and *bhakti* to his version of *karma yoga*. The inclusion of *dhyāna* in a syncretic repertoire is hardly surprising since it has been integral part of spiritual practices of various schools, not only the orthodox ones, but also unorthodox ones such as those of Buddhism and Jainism. Moreover, practice of *dhyāna* has been part of daily ritual of countless people in India, whether it is very serious or casual and superficial.

9.1.4 Understanding Tilak as a Practitioner of Karma-Yoga

If one gets to know Tilak only from his *Gātārahasya*, he would come across as a philosopher. On the other hand, knowing him through his biographies he would appear as an astute and highly influential politician and a great freedom fighter. It may appear to some that the two aspects of his life, philosophy and politics are rather disconnected. There are of course philosophers in the history of Western philosophy who had combined philosophy with active politics in their lives; we could cite a number of such names from Socrates to Sartre. However, in the case of numerous Western philosophers, the question of relation between what they thought and said and what they did in their personal lives does not occur. In this context, a distinct feature of Indian approach to philosophy may be noted: that in the Indian tradition philosophy has commonly meant philosophy of life, a guide on how to lead a meaningful life. There is an expectation that a thinker walks his talk, rather than just explain some particular aspect of what the world is like: a perspective on issues in ontology, epistemology or axiology. In the Indian tradition, it is the implicit expectation of the integration of thought and action where psychology becomes an integral part of philosophy, rather than two separate

endeavors. This should be particularly clear in the case of Tilak, where his *karma yoga* is simultaneously a philosophy of life and a form of applied psychology. Such integration is not, of course, a special feature of Tilak's approach; it is reflected in most schools of Indian thought that are not purely theoretical enterprises, but are closely associated with consistent practices of spiritual uplift.

Given his great role in India's freedom struggle, many of Tilak's biographers have focused on his political contributions the most, with some attention paid to his scholarship, especially to his *Gātārahasya.* As noted above, some biographical accounts do mention aspects of his spiritual pursuits: his talk about surrendering to God, or his being immersed in meditation. And yet, most biographers have not focused on his spiritual practices. Luckily, the library at the office of *Kesarī*, the newspaper which Tilak founded, has preserved a lot of archival material including not only all of his own writings, but also an exhaustive collection of writings about him. Tilak did not write an autobiography, so we do not get to see how he saw himself, particularly in terms of his spiritual practices, or *sādhanā*. Had he become known as a spiritually advanced person and consequently attracted disciples, we would have known about the spiritual aspect of Tilak's life through his disciples. Although he had a great following, and some of his contemporaries had recognized his spiritual merit, the bulk of adoration was focused on his political exploits. Nevertheless, a thorough search through the catalogue of writings about him reveals a few writings that examine the spiritual aspect of Tilak's life. A good example of this is an article by S.D. Pendse, a noted Marathi scholar, which appeared among the many essays published in the context of his birth centenary in 1956.

This article presents a perspective on Tilak's thought on ethics and spirituality as reflected in the latter's *Gītārahasya* (Pendse 1956). Pendse points out that, in Tilak's opinion, the origin of all ethical norms must be found in the highest spiritual attainment of a human being. According to the Vedānta system, the highest spiritual attainment of a human being is *mokṣa* (liberation). While Vedānta implies pure spirituality, ethics are simply its practical aspect. Thus, from Tilak's viewpoint, spirituality and ethics are but two aspects of the system of Vedānta. Pendse points to a long sentence from *Gītārahasya* as indicative of the essence of Tilak's life and teaching. The sentence is long-winded and hard to translate. Its purport may be paraphrased as follows:

> Ideally a person should attain inner calm by purging the mind of all desires through the realization of the identity between the *self* and Brahman. One should thereby attain equanimity, and malice toward none. Upon attainment of such a state, one should set an example for others through one's own behaviour, and help everyone around oneself in attaining spiritual progress.

According to Pendse, this is what Tilak preached, and that is what he successfully practiced throughout his life.

It is interesting to note that the sentences Pendse chooses to help understand the essence of Tilak's life are taken from his chapter on the behavior of a *self-realized* person in the *Gītārahasya*. As is commonly understood, a *self-realized* person attains a dynamically stable intellect (*sthita-prajñatā*) that reflects equanimity and

inner calm which enables such a person to face the gravest crises without being ruffled by negative emotions. Are there any indications in Tilak's life that he had attained such a state? Belvi (2004) suggests an answer to this question in his short biography of Tilak. He points first to Tilak's involvement in the Tai Maharaj case, which dragged on for over 20 years and drained his financial and other resources when he needed them the most. Tilak went through this ordeal calmly regardless of the many reverses and nagging moments. His only motive in facing the situation was to perform his duties following from promises to a friend. There are several other instances of Tilak's exceptionally stable emotional disposition.

While waiting to hear the result of his first trial on the serious charge of sedition, Tilak's friends broke down in anticipation of the bad news. Indeed, Tilak went to sleep as usual while his friends had literally lost their sleep. After waking up he made casual remarks and joked despite the somber mood of those around. Similarly, while waiting for the result of the second sedition trial in 1908, a friend said that Tilak would soon be taken to the jail. In response Tilak casually remarked: "What difference would that make? The British have already turned the whole nation into a prison. All they will do is to send me to a different cell in the same prison" (Belvi 2004, p. 41). There were also instances in his life where an ordinary person would break down with grief, but Tilak remained unmoved. Thus, in 1903 when his eldest college going son Vishwanath succumbed to the plague, his son-in-law Ketkar stood speechless in front of him. Tilak broke the silence saying: "Is it not natural, after all, that we would lose some firewood of our own when the whole town is up in flames?" A couple of years later, someone informed Tilak that his second son was seriously ill. Tilak instructed his attendants not to distract him with such news from home until the tasks on hand, namely the celebrations at Shivaji's fort, were complete. He could attend domestic issues only after his public responsibilities were taken care of. In another instance, when his youngest son Waman died at a very young age, he asked his nephew not to wake up the infant's mother from sleep; she would come to know what has happened soon anyway.

Before completing this overview of Tilak's life we may pause to examine an issue about his staunch nationalism. One may ask in this connection: Is it not that a proper spiritual pursuit aims at love for an all-compassing love extending to the entire humanity and beyond? If so, how is this limiting of love for only a section of humanity justified? Interestingly, one of the essays published by Divekar (1956) addresses this issue. Divekar offers an interesting perspective in regard to the connection between love of the ubiquitous Divine and the love of motherland in Tilak's life. According to this perspective, which he points out to be traditional one in Indian thought, there is a continuum from individuality through collectivity to Divinity (*vyaṣṭi, samaṣṭi, and parameṣṭi*). Thus, individualistic self-love may be transformed into love for all-encompassing Divine by successively expanding its scope to increasingly expanding in groups. This approach to the successive expansion of ego-boundaries helps make sense of Tilak's legendary quip that he viewed his love for the motherland as but a measure of his love for God. Tilak's deep involvement in his family, with his city where he was a councilman for some time, his devotion to his profession of journalism, his deep love for his language

expressed in his choice of Marathi as the language of his *magnum opus*, his pride for Hindu religion and philosophy, and most of all his intense nationalism all indicate that he practiced exactly what he preached.

Here one may ask: Does his opposition to the British not imply the rejection—even hatred—for a section of humanity go against the principle of love for all which is to be expected among *self-realized* persons? A possible answer to this is that, born in a historical era of subjugation under an exploitative foreign rule, fighting for national freedom had to be the highest priority. Moreover, as noted earlier, he explicitly mentions in *Gītārahasya* that it is most legitimate for a nation to take up arms against another nation that politically dominates and exploits it. Had he been born under different circumstances, he might have been a *jñāna-yogin* working hard in the service of the whole of humankind. This would of course be pure speculation, and not a testable hypothesis, and may be left at that.

9.2 Saint Tukārāma: Self-transformation Through Devotion

India is a land of saints and devotees. The tradition of devotion (*bhakti*) goes back to the ancient Āḻvārs (or Azhwārs) of south India to around 4200 BCE–2700 BCE. From that hoary past, there has been an uninterrupted continuation of the tradition of *bhakti* with branches and regional variations continuing to appear till this day.[7] Several *bhaktas* have been recognized as saints. Each generation has its share of saints; virtually every community, caste, and creed has its share. The fifteenth century, in particular, witnessed the rise of some of the greatest saints in different regions of India, such as Kabir (1440–1580), who was raised in the family of a Muslim weaver; Guru Nanak (1469–1539), the founder of the Sikh faith; and Meera (1498–1557) who saw herself as a lover of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Any of these could be more than adequate to present as illustrative cases, and in the same line we can think of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (1836–1886) in more recent times. The list is endless.

Our choice of Tukārāma (c.1598–1650) for a case study in this book is based on the following considerations: *First*, he is indisputably one of the greatest of devotees of all times; *second*, abundant sources are available for a detailed study. We have for example, (i) his highly popular book of well over 4,000 poems called the *Gāthā* in which he candidly talks of himself and eloquently expresses his thoughts and feelings; (ii) fairly reliable biographical account of his life by Mahipati (1715–1790)[8] and (iii) a detailed scholarly analysis of his work by the Ranade (1933). The

[7]For an overview of the various *bhakti* movements see Sharma (1987).

[8]Mahipati's biographical accounts of the life of Tukārāma appear in two of his works: first, a shorter version as part of his *Śrī Bhakta Vijaya*), and a longer version in his *Bhaktalīlāmṛta* (eighteenth century/1974). Although composed a century after Tukārāma's death, it is still considered the most authentic account of his life. While both versions are in Marathi, the latter version is available in English translation by Abbott (1930), and is used in preparing the present work.

latter is particularly valuable since Ranade (1886–1957) was not only highly regarded as a philosopher, but was also acclaimed as a saint in the Nimbargi *sampradāya,* a tradition of *bhakti* in Karanataka (see Deshpande 1978).

Unlike Tilak, who was himself a philosopher, exponent and practitioner of *karma yoga*, Tukārāma was not a philosopher or a theoretician, but a consummate practitioner. He imbibed the principles underlying spiritual practices of the classical Indian philosophy in general, and of the *bhakti* tradition in particular, through the influence of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* (a sect, or tradition), which is arguably the most prominent tradition of *bhakti* in Maharashtra. Here we will take a brief overview of the historical background of the *bhakti* tradition of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* so that the life and work of Tukārāma can be understood within its historical and cultural context. Later on in this chapter we shall examine the life and experience of Tukārāma in light of the conceptual framework regarding the transformation of emotion in religious devotion explained in Chap. 6 of this book.

9.2.1 Historical Background of Tukārāma's Life and Work

For several generations before him, Tukārāma's family belonged to the Vārkarī *sampradāya*, which is one of the many traditions of *bhakti* spread across the Indian subcontinent. Its followers are predominantly in Mararashtra. It was founded by Saint Jñāneśwara (1275–1296) who wrote a superb commentary on the *Bhagavad Gītā* called the *Jñāneśwarī*. It indicates deep impression of the teachings of the yogis of the Nātha *sampradāya* and of Kashmir Śaivism. By choosing to write in the local language Marathi, rather than in classical Sanksrit, Jñāneśwara made the concepts and principles of spirituality accessible to a wider community beyond that of the Brahmins. Saint Nāmadeva (1270–c.1350), a contemporary of Jñāneśwara, also chose to write in Marathi. Himself belonging to the *śimpī* caste of tailors, Nāmadeva popularized the Vārkarī *sampradāya* among the "lower" castes, thus leading to its "democratization" (Chitre 1990). Prominent saints of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* belonged to virtually every caste, including the untouchables. There were some women who also became recognized as great saints, such as Muktābāī and Janābāī. The next most important saint poet belonging to this tradition was Ekanātha (1533–1599). He rendered the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* from the original Sanskrit into Marathi, thereby making a most important source of the principles and practice of *bhakti* accessible to a wider population. Thus, for many individuals like Tukārāma, who were deprived from proper training in Sanskrit, the *Gītā* and *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the basic works in the *bhakti* literature, became easily accessible. It is widely believed that while the foundation of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* was laid by Saint Jñāneśwara, Tukārāma became the pinnacle of its edifice.

The period of about four centuries following the founding of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* was a period of economic uncertainty and political turbulence. As economy almost completely depended on agriculture, which in turn depended on monsoon rains, the economic well-being of the populace depended on the vagaries

of the seasons. Periodic droughts led to mass starvation and hardships. The waves of Islamic invaders led to frequent wars between the locals trying to protect themselves from the invaders. As we shall presently see, some of the most important events in the life of Tukārāma were marked by such economic and political background.

9.2.2 The Life of Saint Tukārāma

Tukārāma is generally believed to have been born in 1598, although there is no certainty in this regard. He was born in a family belonging to the *kuṇabī* caste whose members are traditionally tillers of the land. In the hierarchical ranking of caste groups in the four categories of the *varṇa* system, the *kuṇabī* caste belongs to the category of the *śūdras* ranked fourth below the Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, and the Vaiśyas. This implies that the community did not benefit from education as did the upper castes. Tukārāma must have received some education; he was certainly literate, but apparently he did not benefit from learning Sanskrit. Indeed, he had superb mastery of Marathi; many of his expressions have become integral parts of the language greatly enriching it. His poems make it quite clear that he had become well versed in the basic concepts of philosophy and spirituality through the Marathi writings of his forebears in the Vārkarī *sampradāya.*

Mahipati, who traces Tukārāma's family roots over half a dozen generations, points out that one of his ancestors named Viśvambhar was a great devotee and a member of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*. Thus, worship of Viṭhobā and going on pilgrimages to Pandharpur were part of the family tradition for a long time. Tukārāma's father Bolhoba ran a grocery shop in the village of Dehu near the city of Pune. Since Bolhoba's elder son was not inclined to worldly affairs and was keen to pursue a religious life, he decided to pass on the family business to Tukārāma. Tukārāma was only 13 years old when he took charge of the grocery shop. As per custom of the times, both Tukārāma and his elder brother were married off during their teen age. Since his first wife was asthmatic, and was thought of being unable to bear a child, Tukārāma was married off a second time to a girl called Jijāī. When Tukārāma was 17 years old, his parents passed away. Soon thereafter his elder brother left the home to pursue religious activities. Thus, the responsibility of supporting the whole family including his sister in law fell on Tukārāma when he was still a teen ager.

In his 21st year, Tukārāma started to face a series of adversities. A severe drought lead to wide spread famine affecting the entire population. Tukārāma's first wife died helplessly pleading for food. The grocery business went down and he became bankrupt. Luckily, he was able to borrow some money on a promissory note, and started business ventures trading grain and other agricultural products. Although he was successful in some of these ventures, he gave away the profits to persons in need, whether genuine or not. Being kind hearted he would give away whatever money or assets he may have, keeping little if anything for supporting the

family. As he was unable to pay back the promissory note, the debtor kindly offered him the job of guarding his fields. His daily job was to mount on a platform overseeing the field and drive away with slingshots the birds that pecked at the kernels. Tukārāma thought that the birds had as much of a right to survive as people, so he let them eat whatever they needed. Needless to say, the crop was a pray to the birds leaving very little for the owner.

Already bankrupt, Tukārāma was dragged to the village council where he was publicly humiliated. Tukārāma was not naïve enough to habitually walk into bad deals; indeed he often manifested business savvy. However, he would repeatedly give away whatever he had to the needy or to religious people. In one instance when the rains were favorable and crops were bountiful, Tukārāma was able to bring home bags of grain that would last for a whole year. But he soon organized religious feasts, and gave away the bounty to the needy rather than keeping enough grain to feed the family through the rest of the year. Such behavior would of course upset his wife who constantly faced problems in putting enough food on the table. In one instance, Tukārāma gave away to a beggar at the door the only dress his wife had—which she had kept hanging on a peg while taking a bath. To boot, his second wife Jijāī was constantly nagging—like Socrates's wife Xanthippe.

As could be expected, the continuing stream of calamities led Tukārāma to desperation and despondency. Ranade (1933, p. 286) describes the situation as the "dark night of the soul"—a condition not uncommon in the lives of saints in the West as well as the East. However, Tukārāma turned the adversity into an opportunity; he thought it was a blessing in disguise. At one time some saintly persons asked him as how he turned to God. In a poem (no. 1333) which he composed in response to such a question, he provides an autobiographical account recounting the background narrated above. Then in another poem (no. 1335)[9] he thanks God for bringing in his life famine and starvation, loss of cattle and wealth, a nagging wife, bankruptcy, and public humiliation. It was good, he says, that he neglected his wife and children; all the calamitous circumstances were effective in his turning firmly and irrevocably to God. To put in his own words, for him life had become as disgusting as vomit (*jālā hā vamana saṁsāra*). Examining Tukārāma's mood in the contemporary context Chitre (1990, p. 112) compares it with the modern existentialists' account of meaninglessness of life, its hollowness and absurdity, and the experience of angst and alienation in response.

At any rate, turning away from the pleasures of life, Tukārāma turned to God with the greatest sincerity, intensity and urgency. Nevertheless, turning to God did not mean completely renouncing family and becoming a *saṅnyāsin*. Till his death he lived with his wife and children, and remained involved with the community. (He had three daughters and three sons). As his reputation as a saintly person

[9]The poem numbers cited here are from the second edition (1955) of the collection of Tukārāma's poems published by the Government of Bombay (now govt. of Maharashtra) under the title "*Śrī tukārāmabāvāṅcyā abhaṅgāṅcī gāthā*." It is commonly referred to simply as the *Gāthā*. Throughout this chapter the meanings of his poems are rendered (by A.C. Paranjpe) in a paraphrase in English, rather than in strict translations to avoid clumsiness.

spread, many people came to him for advice and remediation from suffering. An interesting example is that of Śivājī, who came to see Tukārāma when the former was still young and had just started his guerilla warfare which eventually led to the founding of the Maratha Empire. The story goes that Tukārāma not only refused to take Śivājī's offer of a plateful of gold coins, but advised him against his impulsive desire to give up a warrior's life and turn to a spiritual pursuit. On the other hand, he reminded Śivājī of his duty as a person born in the warrior caste to fight against the invaders—and seek advice from the "activist" saint Ramdas, rather than someone like himself (Ranade 1933, pp. 266–267).

In one of his poems (no. 1368) Tukārāma explicitly says (probably partly as a general principle and partly addressed to himself) that for the pursuit of a spiritual life there is no need to starve oneself or to live in a forest; what is needed is to keep God in mind while enjoying life's pleasures, and also while suffering. At any rate, while continuing with his life as a householder, at the age of about 21, Tukārāma undertook a project of repairing an old temple, and started to spend more and more time there in doing *kīrtan,* that is singing the praises of God. Now and then he would go away to a secluded and quiet place in the nearby mountains and meditate.

9.2.3 The Background and Nature of Tukārāma's Spiritual Practice (Sādhanā)

In the spiritual lore of India there is a very high place assigned to the guru, the teacher and guide who would show the right path to the disciple and help him traverse the difficult path to enlightenment. In the case of Tukārāma the story goes that at one time his guru appeared in his dream. His name was Bābājī Caitanya, a disciple of Keśava Caitanya, who in turn was a disciple of Rāghava Caitanya. The "Caitanya" part of their names suggests that they belonged to the tradition of Caitanya Mahāprabhu but there is no evidence to that effect.[10] The guru gave Tukārāma a mantra composed of three names of God: *Rama, Kṛṣṇa, Hari* (see Abbott 1930/1980, p. 177). Equipped with this mantra, Tukārāma formally set out on the spiritual path. In Abbott's translation of Mahipati's biography of Tukārām we find the following account of Tukārāma's daily routine during his days of spiritual practice (*sādhanā*):

[10]CaitanyaMahāprabhu's tradition of *bhakti* is often known as the GauḍīyaVaiṣṇava tradition. It is called Gauḍīya since many of its saints belonged to the Gauḍa region, now called Bengal, and as Vaiṣṇava since they worship Lord Viṣṇu. Rūpa and Jīva Goswamī, whose names were mentioned as interpreters of the nature of *bhakti* in light of the theory of aesthetics, belonged to this tradition. Its more recent successor was A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (1896–1977), the founder of International Society for Krishna Consciousness, (ISKCON), commonly known as the "Hare Krishna Movement." In Maharashtra, Viṣṇu is known by different names such as Viṭṭhala,Viṭhoba and Pāṇḍuraṅga, and His idol at the town of Pandharpur is the main place of worship and pilgrimage for members of the Vārkarī *sampradāya*.

> He [Tukārāma] would bathe in the early morning, and then go to the temple of Pandurang. After performing his worship, and making his offerings, he accustomed then to go into the wilderness…. Mount Bhandar was six miles West of Dehu. Tuka had the habit of going there and sitting alone by himself. (Abbott 1930/1980, p. 91)

It is not clear how long this routine continued, or for how long the sessions of silent meditation normally lasted. As he continued spending more and more time doing *kīrtan* in the newly repaired temple, he gradually started attracting more and more devotees who would come to listen to his discourses and singing. He would sing and dance with the accompaniment of *vīṇā* (a stringed instrument) and drums played by a devotee with cymbals keeping the beat. Spending a lot of time every day at the temple meant keeping away from his wife and children and neglecting his duties as husband and father. Friends would caution him about his neglect of the family even as wife Jijāī continued her constant nagging. As Tukārāma says (in poem no. 1333), he did not listen to the advice of friends, and ignored all the public criticism. As days passed he started getting inspiration for composing poetry. Once again he had dream, like the earlier dream in which his guru appeared and gave him the mantra. This time it was Saint Nāmadeva who appeared in his dream and directed him to compose thousands of poems and try to fulfill his (Nāmadeva's) unfinished plan to compose a million verses expressing *bhakti*. Tukārāma took up this assignment. As soon as he composed a verse, two of his disciples, Gangārāma Mavāḷa and Santājī Telī Jaganāḍe, would write them down. The notebooks of these scribes have been preserved. These notebooks, along with the verses preserved in the oral tradition by innumerable members of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* have provided the basis for the published collections of Tukārāma's poems called the *Gāthā*.

With the passage of time, Tukārāma's *kīrtanas* attracted bigger audiences, and his fame continued to spread in the surrounding region. The rise to fame of this upstart threatened the position of some local pundits who expected that people should follow Brahmins like themselves, and not a low caste person like Tukārāma. As is common in cases like this, Tukārāma's detractors started to find various ways of harassing him. One among such detractors, a pundit by the name of Rameśvara Bhaṭṭa charged that his poetry was spreading false teaching, and forced Tukārāma to throw his manuscripts in the local river. Bundled in a piece of cloth with a rock placed inside it, the manuscript was thrown into the river, immediately sinking it. This was a severe blow to Tukārāma, and he had none other than his God Viṭṭhal to appeal for help. He expresses his appeal in a poem (no. 2493). For 13 days, he says, he was crying for help going without a morsel of food or a drop of water—and yet He had no mercy on him. With a great sense of desperation, Tukārāma threatened to kill himself. At that point a miracle happens: the manuscript floated above water; its pages dry and writing intact. This miracle silenced his critics, and Tukārāma happily continued composing poems.

The floating of the manuscript high and dry was not the only miracle in the life of Tukārāma. Indeed, the main purpose of Mahipati's *Śrī Bhakta Vijaya* appears to be to catalogue the miracles of many saints, Tukārāma being just one of the many. Another more important miracle was at the end of his life, when he is said to have bodily ascended to the heaven. We shall leave aside this topic of the miracles, and turn to Tukārāma's view of God and the nature of his relationship with Him.

9.2.4 God and the Nature of Relationship with Him

A verse that is a very common part of prayer among the Hindus addresses God in the form of one's mother, father, brother, and friend. It is hardly surprising that in many of his poems we find Tukārāma addressing God in these types of human relationships. He was well aware, however, that God, or ultimate reality, is formless. Thus, in one of his poems (no. 1858), he says: "How could we ever fathom your greatness? You are, after all, infinite (*ananta*), formless (*arūpa*), without any sign (*alakṣa*), immovable (*acyuta*), and devoid of any qualities (*nirguṇa*). Nevertheless, you appear to us in a little form for us, your devotees." Regardless of the conviction that ultimately God is formless, Tukārāma continued to worship Him in the form of idols shaped like humans. Indeed in some of his poems (e.g., nos. 1596, 1597), Tukārāma vividly describes having seen God (calling him Hari, Puruṣottama) clad in dazzling yellow robe, holding the weapon—a discus—and a conch in his hand, coming over from his heavenly abode riding on his eagle. How to interpret such a "vision" of God is an interesting question, but it is better left just at that. However, we may take a quick look at the strategy of worshipping an ultimately formless God in concretized human forms.

Viewed from the vantage point of contemporary psychology, this strategy would make good sense. It is a common insight of modern psychology that children first think up simple cognitive tasks such as adding numbers with the aid of concrete representations as in using fingers to count and add. The capacity to grasp abstract concepts such as numbers, or even ideas like "government," is acquired in later phases of human development. Moreover, the acquisition of ability to comprehend abstract concepts remains beyond the reach of a significant section of the population. It may thus be understood that the concretization of the abstract is a maneuver designed to make the Divine accessible to common men and women. Nevertheless, there are some dangers in idolatry, and Tukārāma is well aware of them. Thus, in one of his poems (no. 2827) he asks: "What is the point is worshipping pieces of stone or brass or other metals—without the right feelings behind it?" In another poem (no. 4366), he says "Damn those who think of God Viṭṭhal as bit a piece of rock" (*mhaṇe viṭṭhalā pāṣāṇa, tyāce toṇḍāvarī vahāṇa*). Surely the crux of *bhakti* lies in the *feelings* which a devotee invests in the idol of his worship. Further, as explained earlier (in Chap. 6) the path of devotion—*bhakti mārga*—seeks to attain *self-realization* through the transformation of feelings and emotions, even as *jñāna-* and *karma mārga* seek to attain the same result through the systematic use of cognition and volition.

Tukārāma views God in a wide variety of forms, and places himself in different types of relationships with Him. This allows him invoke within himself a wide array of feelings, and in his poems we come across their dazzling display. Sometimes he places himself in a lowly and subordinate positions and otherwise at other times. Thus, in one of his poems (no. 3590) Tukārāma says "I am just a dog at your door; please don't beat me up!" Extending the metaphor of a dog, he says (in poem no. 1814) that he is like a pet dog that brushes his body against his master's

feet; seeing that the master is dining, it goes near the master with its tail wagging, hoping that the master would rather throw some crumbs at him rather than getting angry with him." To some readers the expression of such feeling might appear grotesque. But note what he says elsewhere: At one point (poem no. 1724) Tukārāma asks devotees set out on a pilgrimage to convey his message to God. "Please don't forget me God," he says. "This is a humble request to you from your servant, my dear God. I am a mere broom used for sweeping the dust at your door. My mind and body is merely a shoe in your foot, a spittoon into which you may spit; I am simply your feces." A reader may think of this as an expression of not just humility, but an embarrassingly excessive self-degradation. What sense can we make of such an extreme debasement? One way to understand this is to see it as a step toward a complete effacement of one's ego. In that process, all feelings of pride must be set aside. Some saints—Sri Ramaṇa Maharṣi among them—justify begging door to door for food as a way of shedding pride. Then again it is interesting to see that, in sharp contrast to this self-debasement, Tukārāma views himself in the position of a close friend of God, thus elevating himself to a position at par with His exalted status. It is very interesting indeed to see how Tukārāma places himself in various role relationships with God, and expresses a panorama of feelings typical of those relationships.

In poem no. 2607 Tukārāma addresses God in a very endearing tone: "You are my mom (*māulī*), dear Pāṇḍuraṅga; I have been waiting to see you for long. You are my elder (*vaḍīla*), nay, my kid brother (*dhākulā*). Really, you are my closest relative (*soyarā*). I have rendered my soul at your feet; without you, life is so empty!" One of the interesting aspects of the emotional bonds between paired relationships such as mother–child is the intensity of the yearning for reunion during periods of separation. In his poems Tukārāma repeatedly compares his yearning to meet with God to the deep feelings of the mother who is for whatever reason separated from her baby. Never short of metaphors to express the shades of his intense feelings to meet with God, Tukārāma compares his situation repeatedly with a fish out of water. In one instance (in poem no. 1031), he adds the example of a person tormented by the need to get back his missing treasure which has been buried somewhere, but cannot remember where. If there is one thing that a reader cannot miss while going through the collection of his poems is *first*, the shear intensity of his yearning to meet with God; and *second*, the innumerable shades of feelings he has vis-à-vis the Divine. He is arguably at his best when he thinks of God as his friend, and portrays the kaleidoscopic variations in his relations with God. There is an interesting series of poems which describes Tukārāma's quarrel with God (2988–3019). These poems provide a peep hole for looking into this marvelous kaleidoscope. By way of an example, here is a paraphrase of what Tukārāma says to God in one such poem:

> God, you should know it very well that devotees like us have no other friend than you. You are truly a thief, as you have stolen my heart, and have turned me into a puppet in your hands. I came to you for help, but you, the Formless, have turned out to be a heartless rogue (*naṣṭa*). I am surprised to find out that you do not treat everybody equally; to some you treat with feasts while starving others. You have virtually destroyed me; I have lost my home,

> my farm, my cattle; you got me estranged from my family. Please don't play games with me; remember that I am a businessman smart enough to figure out what you are up to. You are not only heartless but a shameless (*nirlajja*) knave (*kapaṭī*). It has now come to a point that I should either kill you or kill myself. (*jīva ghyāvā kiṁvā dyāvā*)

Needless to say, it is only very intimate friends that can get away with using some of the choicest swear words with each other without taking literal meaning any of those words. At times Tukārāma jokes with God, and teases Him. Here is one example of teasing: "How could a lotus ever enjoy its own fragrance? It is only the bee that can enjoy it. Likewise, it is only we, the devotees, who can enjoy the sweetness of you name; after all you don't even know your own name! It is only the infant who can enjoy the taste of mother's milk; the same milk means little if anything for the mother herself." In this poem (no. 533) Tukārāma finally likens himself with a pearl and God with the shell within which the pearl is ensconced, suggesting that the shell cannot appreciate the valuable content hidden inside it. In a similar vein, Tukārāma calls out God and says:

> After all it is we, the devotees, who have put you in your exalted position. Otherwise, you were sitting there, formless, all alone, without having anybody to even notice you. It is darkness that proves the value of light; the patient who makes for the value of the doctor; and it is poison that assigns nectar its value. (poem no. 3389)

Thus, in various and very subtle ways Tukārāma places himself and the devotees in levels of status *above* the deity. Given the extreme self-degradation noted above at one and, and with teasingly elevating oneself above the Divine at the other end, there is a vast spectrum of nuanced emotions that lie in-between! Here is another example of how Tukārāma pokes fun with God. Whereas going on annual pilgrimage to Pandharpur has been a most important feature of life in the Vārkarī *sampradāya*, he pleads that no one should go there, since, he says, a ghost (meaning his beloved God Viṭṭhal) lives there which haunts every visitor. Remember, he says, that when Tukā went there last time, he disappeared, never to be born again! (poem no. 4051). While the artful juxtaposition of a negative outcome such as dying with the supreme ideal of liberation (*mokṣa*) suggests Tukārāma's poetic genius, it also presents a superb example of his playful relationship with the Divine.

What is even more amazing is that, after engaging with God in such playful dalliance, Tukārāma says: "As far as I am concerned, God is dead; if others think that He exists, that's fine by me (*māze lekhī deva melā, aso tyālā asela*, poem no. 2349). Surely he did not mean "God is dead" in Nietzsche's sense; he was not complaining about the disbelief in an Abrahamic conception of the Divine under the influence of a secularist and scientific world view. What he means is that, since his ego is completely dissolved, there is no place for an ego/alter or self/other relationship anymore. Given that the devotee/deity relationship implies a dialectic pair where either cannot exist without the other, both of us as ego/alter or devotee/deity are simultaneously dissolved (*gelo doghe khaṇḍonī*). What is crucial in such odd talk is the dissolution or "death" of the ego. Indeed, dying and never to born again is a theme that repeats itself in Tukārāma's poetry. It deserves special attention.

9.2.5 Tukārāma's Enigmatic Expressions About His Own Death

Tukārāma speaks about death and dying in a most enigmatic fashion. In one of his poems (no. 2668) he provides an elaborate description of the typical Hindu funerary ritual in such a way that each step of the somber ritual is symbolized as a step in a spiritual aspirant's progress toward the goal of liberation. For example, the intense feelings of renunciation are compared with cow-dung-cakes added to inflame the funerary pyre, and the fire is compared with knowledge of the true self that would "burn" and destroy the ego. Further, the common ritual of breaking an earthen pitcher, which is normally suggestive of the death of the deceased, is viewed as a symbol of Tukārāma's complete dis-identification with his bodily self—implying his own "death." In another poem where he refers to the scene of the cremation ground he talks about chasing a corpse with a stick in hand. How could anyone chase away a motionless dead body? What makes such talk more intriguing is that it is implied that it was his own corpse that he was chasing (poem no. 1403). "I am dead even before dying" says Tukārāma elsewhere (in poem no. 24). Even more intriguingly he says: "I have given birth to myself, born of my own womb. Good that I died that time. As Tukā looks back, and looks ahead [in time], he realizes that he has always been what he is" (poem no. 1337).

All this talk of one's own death and of being born in one's own womb would sound either totally meaningless or "mystical," some psychologists may even view it as indicative of some form of pathology! It surely does not fit common ways of understanding death. There is one of his well-known poems which offers some help in understanding what all this means. It may be paraphrased as follows:

> I witnessed my own death, and what a spectacle it was! The whole universe was filled with joy; it was the most fulfilling experience. At one time I was burdened with egoism. It is through overcoming the ego that I am witnessing such a good fortune. I need no longer to mourn my death; I have shrunk myself to the point being separated from my own self … (poem no. 2669)

It is of course patently absurd to talk about witnessing one's own death, but in the poem just paraphrased the *symbolic* meaning of death is made abundantly clear. It is the complete effacing of his ego that Tukārāma means by his "dying," and not the death of the body. The idea of himself "shrinking" (*saṅkoca*) may be understood to mean that he has emotionally withdrawn from the boundaries of the material and social domain with which he had previously identified as "me." To help understand an important implication of such withdrawal, it will be useful to take a look another poem.

> Tinier than an atom, Tukā is vaster than the skies! Having gulped down my corpse, I have transcended the source of illusion about the nature of the world. The trilogy [of knower, object of knowledge, and knowledge] is transcended, and so light has illuminated in the pot [metaphor for the body]. So now, what is left behind is only in service of others. (poem no. 993)

How can anything be tinier than an atom and vaster than the skies all at the same time? The metaphor underlying this enigmatic expression is distinctly spatial, similar to what is implied Tukārāma's expression of "shrinking" oneself. Here we may turn to William James for help in interpreting this metaphor.

According to James, the self, as most common people have it, is "extended," so to speak in at least three different domains: the material, social, and the "spiritual" (1890/1993, p. 313). In the "material" domain what I consider "me" extends to my body and even clothes, and further into my possessions—a house, movable property, bank account and other such things that I consider "mine." In the social domain the "me" implies family, friends, community and nation with which I identify. Thus, an attack on my country is an attack on *me*. In the "spiritual" domain the self, or ego, involves all my beliefs, values, and ideology; all these constitute the "territory" that I defend against attacks just as I may defend my country. The center of this sphere is the "I"; indeed the "I" is the center of the universe of my experience —to borrow an expression from Erik Erikson. The centripetal force that pulls all the contents of the sphere of the "me" and holds it together is the emotional involvement with each of the items—things/people/ideas that I call mine.

Now looking at Tukārāma through the lens of this model of the "I" and the "me" we may note how, having faced various calamities, he had become disgusted with the entire sphere of his life. In response to this situation, he started to deliberately dilute his emotional investment in his possessions, family and friends, and divert it onto God. It is as if he started to withdraw himself from the boundaries of the sphere of his "me", which is like "shrinking" of the sphere of the *me*. Thus, the radius of the sphere of the "me" continues to decrease, drawing it closer and closer to the "I" at the center. Finally it must rest at the center with nowhere further to go. To continue with the spatial metaphor, the center is a mere "point"—which has only a location, but no extension. The boundaries of the sphere of the "me" would then collapse into a single point—and thus disappear. The ego without boundaries would melt away and disappear into the vast surroundings—like a doll made of salt melting away into the waters of the ocean. The meaning of Tukārāma's idea of his being tinier than an atom and vaster than the skies should now be quite clear.

Let us now turn to another expression in the poem paraphrased above: which is about transcending the trilogy of the knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge. Ordinary ways of knowing necessarily and always imply a distinction between the subject, who experiences and knows, on the one hand, and the object of knowledge on the other. Knowledge, in this context is a link between the two, the subject and the object. As Tukārāma diluted his emotional investment in objects within the sphere of the "me," he effectively withdrew his attention from objects all the way into the center of awareness. At the limiting stage of the withdrawal there is no separation or distinction between the subject and the object, and hence no scope for knowing in the ordinary sense of knowing. The illumination attained in such a situation—the lighting of the light that Tukārāma speaks about—is no ordinary insight, no "knowledge" in the ordinary sense of the word. It is *parā vidyā*, or transcendental knowledge attained in the state of pure consciousness. In his

interpretation of the poem under discussion (no. 993) Ranade (1933, p. 310) says that it implies that Tukārāma "was living in the fourth state" of consciousness. The expression at the beginning of the poem saying that Tukārāma is tinier than an atom and so on is a virtual repetition of an expression in the *Śvetāśvatara* Upaniṣad (3.20).[11] We see in the two poems paraphrased above a reflection of the transcendental and infinitely blissful nature of pure consciousness described in the *Māṇḍūkya* and *Taittirīya Upaniṣads* discussed in earlier chapters of this book. Here we see the influence of Advaita in Tukārāma's ideas. This is a bit complicated issue to which we shall return later.

Before closing this section of death and rebirth, we may venture to suggest a possible way of interpreting these concepts in the context of contemporary idiom. Contemporary perspectives in developmental psychology, such as those of Piaget and Erikson, view the course of human development as a series of stepwise changes where something new comes about during the transition from one stage to the next. Thus, an asexual child transforms into an adolescent with secondary sexual characteristics, and then into a fully sexual adult. In an analogous way, a financially dependent child becomes a financially independent adult. In a parallel way, one could say that a bud disappears when it transforms into a flower, and in a sense the bud "dies" leading to the "birth" of a flower. To the extent that a high school student strives to end the school going stage and voluntarily enters college as an undergraduate, it is as if one chooses the "death" of an earlier self and gives "birth" to new self. If this way of putting the transition makes sense, then the student could put it in the words of Tukārāma saying: "I have given birth to myself, born of my own womb. Good that I died that time." It is interesting that Tukārāma's words that follow the sentence just quoted are: "As Tukā looks back, and looks ahead [in time], he realizes that he has always been what he is" (poem no. 1337). These words may be understood to mean that when Tukārāma started looking back into his past, he found a series of instances where he discarded his old self, embracing a new one. To borrow a phrase from Erikson, life may be viewed as a series of transitions from an "abandoned self" to an "anticipated self." Another way of saying the same thing is that life is a continual process of Becoming something different from what one has been. This means that throughout the unending process of changes in life, one never *is*, but only was, and will be. In his process of looking back and looking ahead, Tukārāma must have not only realized this truth, but discovered the true Self, the Ātman, which he always was, is, and would always be. Needless to say,

[11]The words of the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.20) are:

aṇor aṇīyan mahato mahīyān ātmā guhāyāṁ nihito'sya jantoḥ |
tamakratum paśyati vītaśoko dhātuḥ prasādān mahimānam īśam ‖ 20‖

Tinier than even the atom and greater than the greatest, the Ātman is concealed in the heart of the creature. By the grace of the Creator, one becomes free from sorrows and desires, and then realizes Him as the great Lord.

what Tukārāma said is no different from what is called *self-realization* (*ātma-sākṣātkāra*) arrived at through the wise discrimination between what remains unchanged and what is open to change (*nitya-anitya-viveka*) in the Advaita system.

9.2.6 Theory and Practice of Bhakti Yoga

As noted in Chap. 6 of this book, in *bhakti yoga* there is special focus in the transformation of the spiritual aspirant's *emotions*, as compared with *jñāna-* and *karma yoga* where the emphasis is on respectively the thinking and volition. Even superficial reading of Tukārāma's *Gāthā* makes it clear that its most distinctive feature is the richness of his emotional experience. The shear intensity with which he yearns for a meeting with the Divine is most remarkable. Although varied aspects of his emotional experience are reflected in the poems, the most important emotion is that of love, mainly love for God. It is easy to see that this is completely in line with the way in which *bhakti* has been defined in the classical texts. As noted, in Nārada's (n.d./1972) *Bhakti Sūtra* (1.2), *bhakti* is defined as the highest form of love (*paramapremarūpā*). Tukārāma's words express an outpouring of his love for God. Also, as noted, Rūpa and Jīva Goswamī emphasize the transformation of emotions (*bhāva*s) into corresponding aesthetic moods (*rasa*s). From their viewpoint, the ultimate aesthetic mood is an all-encompassing *Kṛṣṇa-rasa*, i.e., the all-pervasive Celestial Love. Further, upon successfully traversing on the path of devotion, the devotee is said to be totally immersed into the experience of Celestial Love. In Tukārāma's poetry we find the finest example of the expression of *bhakti rasa*; he is so fully absorbed into this aesthetic mood that his ego dissolves in it.

As to the practice of *bhakti*, from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* onwards it is accepted that there are nine major forms in which *bhakti* is expressed ranging from listening to the stories of God (*śravaṇam*), through singing songs and chanting (*kīrtanam*), to ultimately offering one's self to Him (*ātmanivedanam*). (For a list of the nine forms of the expression of *bhakti*, see Table 6.2). As noted above, Tukārāma spent hours and days, year after year, in singing and chanting the name(s) of God (*kīrtanam*). That, it would appear, was the main form of his "practice" of *bhakti.* Singing, worshipping and such "ritualistic" expressions are often considered "lower" forms as compared to "higher" forms such as cultivating friendship (*sakhyam*)—and rightly so. Even a cursory look at Tukārāma's poems would indicate that he clearly cultivated a friendly relationship with God; indeed his friendship with God involved a host of nuanced shades making it a very rich form of relationship. In other words, Tukārāma's expression of *bhakti* spanned across the entire spectrum of lower as well as higher forms.

We may recall that the Goswamīs of the GauḍīyaVaiṣṇava school differentiate among the various forms of role relationships between the devotee and the deity, dividing them among the following categories: reverence for superiors (*dāsya*), friendship among equals (s*akhya*), affection for subordinates (*vātsalya*), *and* romantic love (*śṛṅgāra*). Further, they rank these in an increasing order of intimacy

between the devotee and the deity. An overview of Tukārāma's poems presented above would make it clear that, while he occasionally saw himself in a very inferior position vis-à-vis God, and sometimes also saw Him in a subordinating position ("We devotees made you what you are"), he placed himself most commonly in an equalitarian relationship as a *friend* of God. The Goswamis view romantic relationship with God as the most intimate. Accordingly, in the *bhakti* literature, Rādhā, who was Kṛṣṇa's paramour in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, as well as historical Saint Meera, are considered as exemplars of the *highest* form of *bhakti* (called the *madhurā bhakti*). Tukārāma did not place himself in the role of God's lover. This may have partly to do with his role in mundane life as a *man*—a husband and father most of all. Being a man did not stop some devotees—Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and many Sufi saints, for instance—from seeing themselves as God's female lovers. Indeed, Sri Ramakrishna dressed like a woman during the period in which he played the role of Rādhā in relation to Kṛṣṇa. Clearly it was not so in the case of Tukārāma. However, he is surely one of the best examples of *sakhya bhakti* involving a most intimate form of friendly relationship with God. In this regard he is in the league of Kṛṣṇa's friends such as Sudāmā in their childhood, and Arjuna in adulthood. Tukārāma seems to have followed the example of Nāmdev, who inspired him in a dream to compose poems. For in Nāmdev's poems we find some of the finest expressions of friendship with God. However, regardless of Tukārāma's spending a lot of time in practicing a "lower" form of *bhakti*, and notwithstanding that a friendly relationship with God is placed lower in comparison with a romantic relationship, he was at his best in totally surrendering his ego—or *ātmanivedanam*—which is the *highest* form of *bhakti*.

9.2.7 Bhakti *in Relation to Other Major Paths to Spiritual Uplift*

The authenticity and greatness of Tukārāma as one of the greatest *bhaktas* has never been in doubt. But can he be taken as a "pure" case of *bhakti* without elements of *jñāna-, karma-* or *dhyāna yoga*? A careful look at his biography and poetry suggests possible answers to this question. Let us look in this context, the following account of his own account of what happened during his escapades to the hills of Bhambagiri.

> In fifteen days I attained realization (*sākṣātkāra jālā*). Aiming for nirvāṇa I sat in a posture (*āsana ghātale*), and started contemplating the Divine. I was attacked by snakes, scorpions and tiger. But my body melted away like camphor in a flame. My mind rested on *parabrahma*. I met with God Viṭhobā in a formless state. (poem no. 4354)

The references here to sitting in a posture (*āsana*) and to the "resting of the mind" are clearly suggestive of the practice of *dhyāna yoga* of Patañjali. This should hardly be surprising, since variations of the practices suggested by Patañjali's *dhyāna yoga* as well as the multitudes of postures and breathing exercises of *haṭha yoga* are

common to spiritual practices of a wide array of schools, including schools of Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Also, Jñāneśvar, the founder of the Vārkarī *sampradaya* had combined the legacy of the Nātha *sampradāya* of yogis with the mainstream of *bhakti*. In his writings, especially in the *Amṛtānubhava*, he tried to reconcile the dualism of the Sāṁkhya system with the strict non-dualism of the Advaita. Although Tukārāma was not a formally trained scholar, he had mastered the Marathi writings of the saints of the Vārkarī *sampradāya* which are replete with the language and principles of the Advaita system. Against this background, Tukārāma's reference to *parabrahma* and the formless nature of the Divine are unmistakable signs of an Advaitic approach.

The specific words such as *parabrahma* need not be taken as telltale signs of Tukārāma's inclination toward Advaita; his experiences and behavior make his mastery of the Advaitic approach abundantly clear. Thus, his characterization of his experience as transcending the trilogy of knower/knowledge/object of knowledge shows beyond doubt that it was the same as the Fourth State described in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. We may note in this context, that Śaṅkara, the chief exponent of the Advaita system sees this Upaniṣad as the essence and the very foundation of the system. The most crucial consequence of the revelation of the true Self is the complete overcoming of the ego leading to extremely selfless and compassionate behavior. That such consequences were reflected in Tukārāma's behavior is obvious. In that regard he is no different from Sri Ramaṇa Maharṣi, although the main difference between them is that while Ramaṇa overcame his ego through intense critical inquiry into the nature of the self as prescribed in the *jñāna mārga*, Tukārāma accomplished the same through the complete surrender of his ego at the feet of the Lord.

Regardless of the demonstration in the life of Tukārāma that the pursuit of *bhakti mārga* can take a devotee to the same highly cherished goal as the *jñāna mārga,* Tukārāma explicitly *disapproves* the latter path. In poem no. 3754 he clearly states that he is not satisfied with the Advaita (*advaitī to maze nāhī samādhāna*). His rejection of the path of knowledge did not result from lack of ability for critical thinking, which is a requisite for its practice. Although he was deprived of formal education, especially in Sanskrit, he was very well versed with Marathi translations of major works. Despite his deep understanding of a sophisticated philosophical text such as the Jñāneśvarī, he did not attach much value to the study of texts (*nako kāhi paḍon granthāciye bharīn*, poem no. 2324). It is not the study of the texts he would mind, but the tendency to engage is empty verbiage (*vāyā kelī toṇḍa piṭī*) that often results from the study of texts (poem no. 2329). But beyond all that, his opposition to Advaita is clear and based on principles.

Devotion implies a fundamental duality between the devotee and the deity—which is in principle opposed to non-dualism of the Advaita. Acolytes of *bhakti mārga* reject the unitive experience of Samādhi, as well as the most vaunted goal of liberation (*mokṣa*) from the cycle of birth and death. Tukārāma clearly says that he does not want to *stay* in the experience of the real Self (*ātmasthiti nako maja*, poem no. 3577), and he prays to God not to give him eternal liberation but repeated rebirth—so he can forever enjoy the company of saints (poem no. 2306). How to

reconcile the dualism of *bhakti* with the non-dualist principle of the Advaita is an old and complex issue. Indeed, during Tukārāma's life time the issue was a topic of scholarship as indicated by works such as the *Bhāgavata-bhakti-rasāyana* composed by one his contemporaries by the name of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (c. 1540–1640). But Tukārāma was first and foremost a practitioner with little interest in such theoretical discussions. Having reached the highest level of practice in the experience of *self-realization* he could afford to assert that only those like him understood the true meaning of the Vedas [including the Upaniṣads], others who carry the burden of scholarship cannot (*vedācā to artha āmhāsīca ṭhāva, yerāṅnī vahāvā bhāra mātha*, poem no. 2266).

9.2.8 Tukārāma's Boundless Compassion

The successful completion of a course of spiritual practices is said to result into a magnificent prize: the experience of an incomparable bliss. Tukārāma describes his experience as waves after waves of bliss in a sea of bliss (*ānandāce ḍohī ānanda taraṅga*, poem no. 3251). His exuberance in describing his extraordinary experience reminds us of the Ānandavalli section of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* where the bliss of the Brahman experience is described as a zillion times greater than the pleasures attainable by a young and healthy man endowed with all the imaginable means of pleasure seeking accessible to an emperor. Such an experience is as strictly private experience as a tooth ache or the taste of salt; it is not accessible to anybody other than the person having it for observation and verification. Nor is it of any direct benefit to others. What is externally observable, however, is the kindness and compassionate behavior of the person which results from the dissolution of the ego in a sea of bliss. Tukārāma's biography provides interesting examples of his kindness and compassion which are worth noting here.

As noted earlier, Tukārāma would always give away his possessions, money or food or whatever to the needy, keeping nothing for himself. He once gave away even his wife's only dress, adding to her continuing agony and frustration. He may be thought as a compulsive giver, but it is clear that his giving away all possessions was prompted by his boundless compassion. Having shed his ego, his behavior was not only selfless and altruistic, but also lacking anger even for those who would annoy or hurt him. He had many tormenters, and the worst among them was Rameśvara Bhaṭṭa who forced Tukārāma to throw his notebook of poems in the river. The biography provides an interesting account of what happened to this tormenter later on. The story goes that for whatever reason Rameśvara once offended a Muslim *fakīr* (a mendicant) who cursed him with the result of causing him great pain (Abbott 1930/1980, pp. 210–219). When Rameśvara prayed for a relief from the pain, the voice answering his prayer suggested that he go to Tukārāma for relief. Embarrassed for having to go in person to a man whom he had despised so much, Rameśvara sent one of his disciples with a letter asking for forgiveness and relief from suffering. In response Tukārāma composed a poem and sent it in a letter. When Rameśvara read

the poem, he was instantly cured of his pain. Leaving aside the "miracle" part of the story, what is very clear is Tukārāma's big heart that would forgive a worst offender. It reminds us of Jesus who prayed God to forgive his killers "for they know not what they do" (Luke, 23.34). There is another similar story about Tukārāma's forgiveness. He stoically and silently suffered from the burns on his body caused by a woman who threw boiling water on him when angered by the fact that her husband had lost interest in life after listening to his discourses. His love was boundless; there was no place for an iota of hatred, even for the worst offenders, and beyond that it extended beyond humanity to all living beings.

We have noted before how Tukārāma had allowed the birds to eat away the crop which he was supposed to guard against their attack. There are other stories about his relationship with insects and birds. He would keep mixture of flour and sugar for ants to eat. Once, while he was walking through a forest, he was attacked by a swarm of mosquitoes, but he paid no attention to their stinging. He would not ward off any of the mosquitoes to avoid giving them pain (Abbott 1930/1980, p. 167). During his pilgrimage to Āḷandī to pay respect to the tomb of Saint Jñāneśvar, he saw some birds picking seeds under a tree. As soon as they saw Tukārāma walking toward them, the birds flew away. He was distressed to find that he was not perceived by the birds as harmless and kind. So he appealed for God's help, and would not eat or even breathe till He restored total kindness in him so the birds would come back. The devotee's prayers were answered; the birds, now fearless, came and sat on his body (Abbott, pp. 290–291). Such a story need not be viewed as a fable of the miraculous power attributed to saints. As recently as in the first half of the twentieth century, numerous visitors to Ramaṇa Maharṣi's *āśrama* had witnessed how not only a pet cow, but peacocks roaming in the vicinity and even monkeys jumping on trees would come over to him, play with him and get caressed in love. The ideal of love extended to all creatures, human or otherwise, is not an empty concept; it is known to manifest in the behavior of persons who successfully traverse the path to *self-realization*, whether the path involves self-transformation through knowledge or emotion.

9.3 Ramaṇa Maharṣi: A Case of Self-realization

The life of Sri Ramaṇa illustrates a different approach to *self-realization*. Whereas Tilak provides an example of a self-directed shaping of behavior aimed at the attainment of *mokṣa*, the life history of Sri Ramaṇa shows how a person could attain *self-realization* through an intense search for the true Self. Unlike both Gandhi and Tilak, Ramaṇa dropped out of family and social life and carried on a lonely pursuit facing intense privation and colossal neglect of bodily well-being. As we shall see, his spiritual path was very close to that of *jñāna mārga*, the path of knowledge. As in the first part of this chapter we shall first present an outline of Ramaṇa's life history, followed by its examination in light of the principles of Advaita philosophy and psychology.

9.3.1 Life Sketch of Sri Ramaṇa

Very little is known about the life of Ramaṇa, much less about his spiritual development. Arthur Osborne's *Ramaṇa and the Path of Self-knowledge* (n.d./2002) is one of the better-known biographies. Paul Brunton's essay on Ramaṇa in his *A Search in Secret India* is widely known (Brunton 1934/1999). There are biographical sketches that can be found in a few publications from the Ramaṇaśramam, the center named after him (Narasimha Swami 1931/1985; Mahadevan 1959/1999; Greenblatt and Greenblatt 1981; Bhikshu 2004). The following brief sketch of Sri Ramaṇa's life history is based on these sources.

Ramaṇa (1879–1950) was born in a small village called Tirucculi some thirty miles south of Madurai, the city known for its famous temples in South India. His parents named him Venkataraman. Father Sundram Aiyar was a noncertified lawyer, and mother's name was A̲lagammā̲l. When Venkataraman was 12 years old his father died, and the family moved to his paternal uncle's place in Madurai. There he was sent to Scott's Middle School and the American Mission High School. Venkataraman was a strong healthy boy who did not show much interest in studies. When he was 17 years old, Venkataraman had a remarkable experience. Although he was in sound health as usual, while sitting up alone he was overcome by a sudden fear of death. As he was not sick requiring medical attention, the boy did not think of going to a doctor. He did not know why such a fear had aroused in him, nor did the feeling of impending death unnerve him. He calmly thought of what he should do. He asked himself: What is it that is dying? His clear answer to this question was that it was the body that would die. Suddenly he lay flat on the floor holding himself stiff, as if rigor mortis had set in. He thought that if he were really dead, his relatives would take the body to the cremation ground and reduce it to ashes. But then what would happen to his "I" and his spirit? He reasoned that his spirit was not inert like the body; it transcends and would survive the body's death. Venkataraman concluded from all this that "I am the deathless *spirit*." Interestingly, the young lad overcame the fear of death once and for all. Moreover, there was a profound change in his life. He was no longer interested in school, studies, friends, relatives, or playing. He became indifferent to his surroundings, and started spending time alone, lost in his thought—apparently in meditation. He also started to go often to the Meenakshi temple in the city, and sat there for hours in deep absorption.

One day Venkataraman took a few rupees from the amount he was supposed to pay as his brother's fees at school, left a note that he was leaving home and that nobody should look for him, and took a train to go to Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, a temple town in Tamil Nadu. There he took refuge in the thousand-pillared building of the temple of God Aruṇācaleśwara, and sat there in deep meditation for hours after hours and days after days. Kind worshippers coming to the temple would take pity on him and give him some food. Such strange behavior of a young lad caught the

attention of street urchins, who started to make fun of him, occasionally pelting rocks at him. As the boys threatened his well-being, some well-wishers moved Venkataraman to an underground vault in the precincts of the temple. It was a very small dark cell in which the boys dared not enter. There the young ascetic spent days and nights in the company of ants, vermin and pests, leading to sores with blood and puss all over his body. A senior ascetic called Śeṣādri took pity on the boy, and volunteered to bring him food and protect him from the nasty boys and other dangers. After a few months spent under such conditions, a few concerned worshippers at the temple physically moved the young ascetic to a secluded spot in a garden. There he stayed within the sanctuary of a gated compound. From there on he was shifted now and then to another garden or grove or a shrine where someone or other voluntarily took care of him.

After this time, the young mendicant moved to a cave in the Aruṇācala Hill in the outskirts of Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, and subsequently moved to other caves and shrines in the Hill's vicinity. Gradually people started to take notice of him and ask all sorts of questions, mostly about spiritual experience and practices. He seldom spoke and often wrote down his answers. Some visitors came with books and asked him to explain the parts of the book that they could not understand. Then the young man would study such books and answer the questions. One of the self-appointed attendants named Palaniswami was interested in reading books on spiritual matters. He borrowed many books from the local library, which were in Tamil. Palaniswami had difficulty in understanding them since he was a native speaker of Malayalam. The young Swami took pity on this man, read the Tamil books, and explained the gist to Palaniswami. It is in this context that he came across Vedāntic treatises such as *Kaivalya Navanītam*, *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* and *Vāśiṣṭham*. Over the years he developed a good understanding of a number of sourcebooks on spirituality, including several works of Śaṅkara on Advaita philosophy. Such reading provided an opportunity to corroborate his own experiences with authoritative writings of the past.

Gradually the reputation of this young ascetic began to spread. Many persons, who found answers to their questions or solace in his presence became his devotees and started to spread his name and fame. One of the early disciples was an erudite pundit and Sanskrit scholar named Ganapati Sastri. In an initial meeting with the young Swami, Sastri mentioned that he had read all the literature on Vedānta, and had mastered it. Despite all the study his knowledge remained bookish; he did not understand *tapas*, austerities and other practices that would lead to the direct experience of the Self. The Swami replied, now speaking: "If one watches whence the notion "I" arises, the mind gets absorbed there; that is *tapas*" (Mahadevan 1959/1999, p. 11).Year after year more people from all walks of life kept coming. Many of the visitors asked him questions which he answered. In 1931 Paul Brunton, a British philosopher and traveler came to see Ramaṇa, and there he had an extraordinary experience which convinced him about the greatness of this ascetic. Brunton's (1934/1999) essay on Ramaṇa in *A Search in Secret India* was circulated widely making the Ramaṇa known internationally.

9.3.2 Teachings of Sri Ramaṇa

Ramaṇa was neither a trained a scholar, nor did he pretend to be one. He did not publish many volumes. His writings are brief; all included in a small book of about 200 pages (Osborne 1985).[12] Of these, about half are composed by himself, and the remainder are translations and adaptations of others' works, especially Śaṅkara's. The two main works, which he authored, include short works titled "*Self-Enquiry*" and "*Who am I*?" Both are based on answers to questions posed by devotees. The other works of his own authorship include *Spiritual Instruction* (*Upadeśa*), *Five Hymns to Aruṇācala*, *Reality in Forty Verses* and so on. The adaptations and translations of others' works include *Vivekacūḍmaṇi* by Śaṅkara, and a Vedāntic text called the *Dṛg-dṛśya Viveka* of controversial authorship often ascribed to Śaṅkara. He also translated a traditional work called *Ātma Sākṣātkāra*, which means *self-realization*.

The names of his main prose works, namely the *Self-Inquiry* and "*Who am I?*" as well as his translation of *Ātma Sākṣātkāra* (*self-realization*) show that the central topic of his concern was the nature of the Self. The basic rationale of his approach can be gleaned from his work "*Who am I?*" in which Ramaṇa observes: "Every living being longs always to be happy, untainted by sorrow; and everyone has the greatest love for himself, which is solely due to the fact that happiness is his real nature" (Osborne 1985, p. 39). As proof of the intrinsically happy nature of human beings he cites that every day each one of us experiences an inner calm in deep sleep while the mind is subdued. In order to discover this inner source of happiness within ourselves, it is argued, it is essential to inquire into the true nature of the Self. Given that most people tend to identify their selves with their bodies, arguments are suggested to dispel this notion. A record of Ramaṇa's conversations with numerous visitors given in *Talks with Ramaṇa* (1955/2003) provides a number of illustrations of simple arguments. A common line of argument was that, when a visitor said "I travelled from X," Ramaṇa pointed out that it was his body that moved in a vehicle while he or she sat, without much of any movement, thinking about something or other. If the visitor mentioned having thought of, observed, felt, done, imagined, or such, Ramaṇa asked her *who* was it that had observed, felt or done something or other. He thus prompted the person to inquire deeply into nature of the "I" who observes, feels, acts and so on. The course of conversation would then turn to point out how the "I" is not exactly or completely the same as one's thoughts, actions, dreams, wishes, and the like but something much deeper. In one of his conversations with a visitor named Miss Leena Sarabhai, Ramaṇa said: "Destroy the ego by seeking its identity" (Talks 1955/2003, p. 134). The reference to *identity* here implies the principle of *unity* and *sameness* underlying the multitude of experiences and actions of the continually changing ego. Interestingly, he ends the conversation saying that "The quest 'Who am I?' is the axe with which to cut off the ego" (p. 134).

[12]More recently the Ashram named after Sri Ramaṇa has published a revised and expanded version of Ramaṇa's Collected Works (2004) which extends to about 300 pages.

The thoughts expressed by Ramaṇa in one of his conversations with a visitor indicate a most crucial aspect of his approach. A lady visiting the Ashram said: "I do not understand. 'I', you say, is the wrong 'I.' How to eliminate this wrong 'I'?" Ramaṇa answered: "How can the 'I' eliminate itself? All that you need to do is to find out its origin and abide there" (Talks 1955/2003, p. 168). If we incessantly ask the question "Who am I?" as Ramaṇa suggests, should we not be able to arrive at a conclusive answer in the end? In response to such a question by one of the devotees Ramaṇa answered: "There is no answer to the Who-am-I question. There can be no answer, for it is dissolving the I-thought, which is the parent of all other thoughts, and piercing beyond to the stillness where thought is not" (Osborne 2002, p. 153). It should be clear from this statement that Ramaṇa was directing the devotee to the "no-thought zone of consciousness", meaning pure consciousness devoid of content, which Patañjali's Yoga aims at attaining by bringing the stream of thoughts to a standstill.

9.3.3 Ramaṇa Viewed from Advaita Perspective

Ramaṇa's inquiry into the nature of Self fits neatly in the tradition of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, which is one of the original sources of AdvaitaVedānta. As we noted in Chap. 6, in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* (2.4.5), the sage Yājñavalkya implores his wife Maitreyī to know the true nature of the Self through study or "listening" (*śravaṇa*), reflecting (*manana*) and meditating (*nididyāsana*). In his introduction to the translation of Śaṅkara's *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* Ramaṇa explicitly mentions hearing, reflecting and meditating as the three basic steps to *self-realization*, and clearly explains self-inquiry (*ātma vicāra*) as comprising of the same three steps. Of these three steps he seemed to emphasize the second, namely reflection, the most. His *Talks* provide numerous examples of how he encouraged his followers to think critically and incessantly about the various ideas they might have about who they are. However, it is hard to say whether during his own *sādhanā* Ramaṇa followed exactly the same three steps. We may never know how he proceeded in his youth since there is no autobiographical account that would have clarified the techniques he had used. Ramaṇa is not known to have had a *guru*; there has been a lot of discussion about how he may have proceeded in his self-development without any formal instruction. It is not clear whether he had read or heard about how to proceed and then followed the prescribed course. Ramaṇa clearly said that he only *corroborated* having the same experiences as described in the Advaita literature after he read *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* and other Advaitic texts. In this context, one wonders if it is possible for persons to follow the prescribed course toward *self-actualization* naturally on one's own without the need of any tutoring.

Although Ramaṇa appears to have followed the Advaitic method of meditation in almost its pure form, there is a reason to believe that his approach combined some elements of other classical approaches, mainly the *dhyāna* yoga of Patañjali. This is suggested by his instruction, mentioned above, that in order to discover the

Self, "All that you need to do is to find out its origin and *abide there*" (Talks 1955/2003, p. 168, emphasis added). This implies that one should, first of all look "inward" rather than objects in the world "out there", which is the same as what is called *pratyāhāra* by Patañjali. Patañjali's aphorisms suggest that, once a seeker turns her attention inward, it must penetrate the layers of connotative and denotative meanings as well as the perceptual and sensory foundations of thoughts to ultimately focus onto the center of awareness. Ramaṇa's idea of finding out the "origin" of thoughts seems to be virtual translation of the maneuver suggested by Patañjali to reach right into the center of awareness. It appears that, seen from the Advaitic perspective, the relentless critical examination of one's self-definitions involved in the process of contemplation (*manana*) penetrates the veil of thought processes that conceals the underlying pure consciousness even as does the concentrative meditation of Patañjali's yoga. Further, Ramaṇa's idea of "abiding there" implies *sustaining* the focus of attention at the center of awareness, which is consistent with Patañjali's idea (in 1.2–3) that, when the stream of thoughts is brought to a standstill, the true self *stays* in its pristine condition.[13]

The issue here is one of understanding the nature of psychological techniques through a careful comparison of the distinctive accounts of ways to *self-realization* presented in the classical writings of the various forms of yoga, namely *jñāna yoga*, *dhyāna yoga* and so on. It is possible that in practice individual seekers would be adopting specific combinations of elements belonging to different "pure" forms of yoga to suit their unique individual needs. As noted earlier in this chapter, Tilak explicitly adopted a syncretic approach, combining elements of various forms of yoga. In this context, it is interesting to note the particular technique of meditation that Sri Aurobindo, a contemporary of Ramaṇa, learned from his guru Shri Vishnu Bhaskar Lele. Aurobindo's biographer Purani (1978) quotes the following words from Sri Aurobindo: "'Sit down', I was told, 'look and you will see that your thoughts come into you from outside. Before they enter, fling them back.'… I saw and felt concretely the thought approaching through or above the head and was able to push it back concretely before it came inside" (p. 98). While Sri Aurobindo thus thought that the thoughts were coming from "outside," Ramaṇa spoke of thoughts emerging from a presumably "inner" source. Other than that, the strategy is essentially the same.

A comparative study of the "methodology" of the different schools of Indian thought and spiritual practice could help in understanding various aspects of distinctly *psychological* techniques embedded in classical accounts that prima facie appear different and compartmentalized but not so separate in the workings of the human mind. Here it would be useful to extend a comparative look beyond the confines of Indian thought to include some of the Western perspectives, ancient as well as modern.

[13]Patañjali's words are: *tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe avasthānam*. The root verb *sthā* in the word *avasthānam* literally means to stand, or to stay.

9.3.4 Ramaṇa's Perspective in Western Context

The ancient Greek invocation "know thyself" parallels the advice by the sage Yājñavalkya to his wife saying that the nature of Self (*Ātman*) is the most important issue for investigation. Keeping in mind that parallel trends do not mean sameness, and reminding ourselves of the need to be mindful of subtle differences, a few observations can be made in the context of cross-cultural comparisons. Interestingly, Ramaṇa himself was clear about the Biblical parallels to his teaching. Swaminathan (1975) lists the following key ideas from the Bible that Ramaṇa often used to cite for the benefit of his Christian as well as his non-Christian listeners: "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalms, XLVI.10); "I am that I am." (Exodus, III.14); "The Kingdom of God is within you" (St. Luke, XII.21), "Before Abraham was I am" (St. John, VIII.58); and "I and my Father are one" (St. John, X.30.). Spiritual quest following Biblical and other religious lines has continued through the past millennia in the West, even as the philosophical inquiry into the nature of the self has continued in the tradition of Socrates. However, as Hadot (1995) has pointed out, from the second century onwards there has been a continual conflict between the Christians on the one hand and the pagans inspired by the Hellenic (i.e., Greek) tradition on the other. Spirituality and philosophy, which were once inseparable, have been segregated and have continued to drift apart. The common historical accounts of the intellectual history of Europe tend to be tilted to the Hellenic side, tracing the development of philosophy as a theoretical enterprise divorced from the practice of philosophy and a personal quest for self-realization. Spiritual quest focused on self-knowledge is pushed into the background, surviving in the shadows of organized religion and sequestered from intellectual ferment in the secular domain. Against this background, modern psychology as founded in America in the late nineteenth century tilted toward the theoretical side. It left a deep impression on the current trends that ignore deeply personal quest for self-knowledge of the type that Sri Ramaṇa pursued and taught. Nevertheless, there are some concepts initiated by William James's famous chapter on the self that help make meaningful connections between modern psychology and Ramaṇa's approach to self-knowledge.

James (1990/1983), as we noted before, makes a fundamental distinction between the self-as-subject, or the "I", on the one hand, and the self-as-object or the "Me" on the other. This distinction is no different from the distinction made between *dṛk* and *dṛśya* in the text called *Dṛg-dṛśya Viveka,* such that *dṛk* implies the Seer or experiencing subject, while *dṛśya* means that which is seen. This text is often ascribed to Śaṅkara, although this ascription is doubtful. (As noted above, this was one of the texts that Ramaṇa had translated). At any rate, the thrust of its teaching is that the true Self is the Seer, not the seen, and according to the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, the Seer is revealed in the Fourth State of consciousness. Indeed, Śaṅkara considers this Upaniṣad as presenting the very essence of Advaita. Ramaṇa's teaching, like Śaṅkara's, is to reach into the Seer at the center of awareness—and "stay there." According to the Advaita perspective, the Seer is the

unchanging backdrop underlying the continually changing images of the ego, which is the self-as-knower equipped with sensory and cognitive apparatus. To put it in contemporary idiom, it is the Seer as unchanging center of awareness that accounts for the unity and sameness as opposed to multiplicity and continually changing nature of our self-definitions. James (1890/1983) discussed in great detail the issue of the dilemma of identity which demands a reconciliation of two mutually opposing impressions that the "I" simultaneously appears to be *one* and *many*, *same* as well as *changing*. James examined the "solutions" to this dilemma suggested by several of his forebears, mainly Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Kant, and came close to admit that the idea of self as a substance was the correct view, but in the end concluded that "*thought itself is the thinker*, and psychology need not look beyond" (p. 379; emphasis original). Here the difference between Ramaṇa Maharṣi and James stands in sharp contrast. Ramaṇa Maharṣi's techniques (and similar others) deal precisely with thoughts, more particularly the *flow* of thoughts, that James so eloquently described with the metaphor of the "stream" of consciousness. In Indian thought, there is a clear separation between the "thinker" of thoughts and the "subject" who experiences them. As noted, in Indian thought thinker is the ego that is equipped with the physical and metal infrastructure required in processes of cognition, while the Seer is distinct and beyond the pale of cognition. While the ego identifies itself with the ongoing thought, the Seer remains unchanged.

It is not a mere conceptual distinction that matters here; it is not a purely "philosophical" issue relevant only to the ontological doctrines exclusively belonging to the philosophical realm. The issue is "psychological" in the sense of having to deal with mental processes such as thinking, and more, it relates to a matter of psychological *technology*. The spiritual traditions in India have developed several alternative techniques for effectively dealing with the ongoing flow of thoughts, which for many seems unstoppable. Many persons who have tried to follow Patañjali's suggestion to bring the flow of thoughts to stop have felt frustrated. Sartre, the famous existential philosopher, has vividly expressed the feeling of frustration experienced in an attempt to control one's stream of thoughts. Thus, in his novel called *Nausea* Sartre says:

> I jump up: it would be much better if I could stop thinking. Thoughts are the dullest things. Duller than flesh. They stretch out and there's no end to them and they leave a funny taste in the mouth … It goes, it goes … and there is no end to it. It's worse than the rest because I feel responsible and have complicity in it … Thoughts are born at the back of me, like sudden giddiness, I feel them being born behind my head. (Sartre 1938/1964, pp. 99–100)

While similar frustrations in coping with the runaway stream of thoughts would be very common, it is only exceptional individuals like Sri Aurobindo, who can accomplish the feat. It is conceivable that Ramaṇa Maharṣi may have spent a great deal of time and effort in reaching the origin of where thoughts come from, and staying there—a task he repeatedly enjoined many seekers to accomplish. It is to the credit of the tradition of Indian psychology to have developed well-known techniques such as Patañjali's yoga. The development of psychological technology

along similar lines has continued till this time as illustrated by the techniques of Transcendental Meditation developed by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and the *Sudarshan Kriya* by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Here one may ask: Was Ramaṇa *self-realized*? This question never seems to have been raised. It seems to have been granted unquestionably that he *was* self-realized. But how does anyone know? As we saw, in the case of Tilak, Pendse (1956) tried to clarify what he had said about ethics and spirituality in his *Gītārahasya,* and concluded that Tilak had successfully practiced what he preached. This implied that Tilak had pretty much attained *self-realization*. Belvi (2004) raised a similar question, and implying that *self-realized* persons' behavior would be like that of the *sthitaprajña* described in the *Gītā*, and pointed out several instances of Tilak's emotional equanimity indicative of *sthitaprajñatā.* It appears that people who knew Ramaṇa and authors who wrote about him never seemed to have doubts about his extraordinarily high spiritual level. Genuine and unlimited compassion, which is a distinct mark of *self-realization,* seemed to be evident for those who saw and knew him. Moreover, a common observation made by people visiting him was the feeling of deep peace they experienced in his presence. Tradition abounds in similar reports of feelings of peace experienced in the presence of saints. In such a situation "science" would have little to say, and thus here the question of what it means may be kept unanswered.

Before concluding this chapter we may note that Sri Ramaṇa's spiritual progress closely followed *jñāna marga* as prescribed by Śaṅkara and many (if not all) of his followers not only with regard to the technique of contemplating the nature of selfhood, but also in regard to dropping out of family and social life. This is true regardless of the fact that he was not formally inducted into *saṅnyāsa*, or the life of a mendicant. As noted earlier in this Chapter, it is the abjuring of one's responsibilities for bringing about cohesion in society (*lokasaṁgraha*) involved in Śaṅkara's *jñāna marga* that Tilak had strongly criticized. In response to such criticisms it is often pointed out that successful practitioners like Ramaṇa do tend to remain in society and do a lot of good by advising countless people who seek their advice. Ramaṇa Maharṣi's writings continue to inspire several people around the world till this date, and even a sort visit to his *ashram* in Tiruvaṇṇāmalai demonstrates that a continuous stream of seekers keeps coming although well over half a century has passed since he left this world. Indeed, Śaṅkara, himself a *saṅnyāsin* and an unrelenting advocate of *saṅnyāsa* as a prerequisite for the pursuit of the *jñāna marga,* was not a recluse. He traveled widely and relentlessly, debated with scholars with differing opinions, and wrote volumes—volumes that continue to guide and inspire scholars as well as spiritual seekers till this day. Such examples of prominent followers of the *jñāna marga* call into question Śaṅkara's critics who hold him responsible for the disdain of Indian intelligentsia about social affairs, and even for the contemporary malaise and degradation of the Indian society.

Chapter 10
Personal and Social Transformation: Gandhi's Psychology of Nonviolence

The thought and practices of Mahatma Gandhi, constitute another important case study of Indian psychology as reflective of the living tradition of India with its unbroken chain of centuries of organic growth. It illustrates the integrative role of Indian psychology and how it finds its expression in the lives of men in vastly different circumstances and in diverse fields. In this chapter, we will attempt to provide a conceptual and theoretical framework within Indian psychology for a coherent understanding of Gandhian thought and social action. We will then discuss the theory and practice of *satyāgraha* as a significant contribution of Indian psychology to social psychology in general and conflict resolution in particular.

10.1 The Background

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948), popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi, was born on October 2, 1869 in the coastal town of Porbandar in Gujarat. Mahatma Gandhi died on January 30, 1948 at the hands of an assassin as he was walking to a prayer meeting at Birla House in New Delhi. The life of Gandhi was a great saga of epic proportions. The metamorphosis of Mohandas into a Mahatma is a compelling story of how a mere mortal with no extraordinary gifts at birth could transform himself and others around him in unbelievable ways. It is a chronicle of *self-realization*, the constant theme in the many facets of classical Indian thought and a crucial concept in Indian psychology.

Though a merchant by his caste, Gandhi's father served as a *dewan* in the small princely state of Porbandar. Thus the business of the state was not very foreign to young Gandhi. However, he showed no inclination or interest in that direction. He was a simple and shy youngster with no special flair for academics, service, or leadership. No one would have predicted that he would grow up to become a martyr and Mahātama, receive the accolades, and achieve the things he did later in his life.

Gandhi does not belong to that distinguished galaxy of great men who show brilliance and exceptionality of intellect and insight right from early life. On the contrary, he rose to eminence in politics and public life by sheer force of will and

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effort in the face of demanding circumstances. Many have called him a prophet. But he disclaimed any such honor, if it was one, and repeatedly maintained that what he did was to realize his beliefs in action. He had neither political ambitions nor inclinations. He went to England to become a barrister. On his return, his services were hired by Dada Abdulla and Co., who were involved in a legal transaction in South Africa. The circumstances that prompted Gandhi to go to South Africa were simple and ordinary. "I wanted somehow to leave India," he wrote in his autobiography. "There was also the tempting opportunity of seeing a new country, and of having new experience. Also I could send £105 to my brother and help in the expenses of the household" (1927/2007, p. 85).

The circumstances in South Africa conspired to bring the best in Gandhi into focus. South Africa became the first laboratory and testing ground for his ideas. South Africa in 1890s was a British colony where whites dominated. Bitter discrimination based on race made the life of self-respecting colored people miserable. During the first year of his stay in South Africa, Gandhi had to go to Pretoria from Durban to represent his client in a law-suit. He was in a first class compartment of the train when in the middle of the night a white passenger came to board the train. When he saw a colored man in the compartment, he complained to the officers who in turn ordered Gandhi out, in spite of the fact that Gandhi held a legitimately purchased first class ticket. When Gandhi refused to leave the compartment voluntarily, he was pushed out of the train by a policeman and was forced to spend the night in the railway station. "There," Gandhi says, "I began to think of my duty. Should I fight for my rights or go back to India, or should I go on to Pretoria without minding the insults, and return to India after finishing the case? It would be cowardice to run back to India without fulfilling my obligation. The hardship to which I was subjected was superficial, only a symptom of the deep disease of colour prejudice. I should try, if possible, to root out the disease and suffer hardships in the process. Redress for wrongs I should seek only to the extent that would be necessary for the removal of the colour prejudice" (1927/2007, p. 94).

Gandhi soon learned that color prejudice was only part of the story. In 1896, there were over 50,000 Indians in Natal alone. This number was larger than the white population. In addition there were 5,000 Indians in the neighboring Transvaal. The Indians were generally thrifty and hard-working. Even though a great proportion of them were originally brought from India as contract laborers to work in plantations, Indians soon became rivals of the whites in business and agriculture. The indentured laborers, as they were called, soon after the expiry of the original labor contracts, began leading their own lives as self-employed. Some of the more enterprising ones owned land and small business establishments. The government, zealous in maintaining white supremacy and intent on exploiting the colored population, began taking oppressive legislative measures which were as economically disastrous as they were socially humiliating to the Indian population. These measures included a law which required Indians to carry with them a certificate of identification, restrictions on the free movement of Indians from one province to another, imposition of poll tax on ex-indentured laborers completely out

of proportion to their wages and designed solely to prevent them from seeking self-employment, and the invalidation of Indian marriages celebrated in South Africa according to Indian rites.

It was in this context of conflict between the ruling authority and some of its constituent members the method of nonviolent direct action, *satyāgraha*, was born. Here was an opportunity to test whether "what is true of families and communities is true of nations," since "there is no reason to believe there is one law for families and another for nations" (Gandhi 1938b, p. 57). It was here Gandhi sought to transform nonviolence, a cloistered virtue so far, into an active social instrument.

First, Gandhi educated public opinion chiefly through a weekly journal *Indian Opinion*. Then he organized mass rallies at which Indians took oath that they will not cooperate and obey the unjust laws and that they will oppose nonviolently the Asiatic Act, the Black Ordinance, as it came to be known, and suffer the consequences. So they refused to take permits which they were required by law to carry with them. In fact, several thousands of identification certificates were burned in a bonfire as a protest. Several Indians crossed into Transvaal and thus voluntarily broke the law and were jailed. Fifty women followers of Gandhi, indignant at the Supreme Court judgment of March 14, 1913, which nullified all marriages celebrated according to Indian rites, crossed into Transvaal without permits. The news of the arrest and imprisonment of the "Transvaal-sisters," Gandhi tells us, spread like wildfire and worked like a charm upon the laborers who had not yet joined the struggle. The laborers struck their work in collieries and plantations. Gandhi put himself at the head of some 2,700 men, women, and children who marched into Transvaal to assert their right of freedom. The "pilgrims" were arrested, prosecuted, and sent to jail. But the situation could not be met by repressive measures.

As Gandhi had expected, the end of the struggle "drew nearer as distress of the fighters became more intense, and as the innocence of the distressed grew clearer" (Gandhi 1928, p. 482). The Government had to give way to public opinion at home and abroad. The Indian Relief Act of 1914 was enacted, and it met most of the demands of the Indians in South Africa at the time. Thinking that his mission was accomplished Gandhi left for India. Again in India Gandhi employed successfully his nonviolent *satyāgraha* technique to help farmers in Champaran, then in Khaira, and finally to achieve independence for India.

Gandhi proceeded to conduct one experiment after another. He was guided by an idealism that gave a constructive forward look and a practicalism that kept his feet on the ground. He was always aware of the problems confronting him. All through his quest, Gandhi was not content in merely solving problems as they arose, but in solving them meaningfully so that he would gain an understanding into the nature of things. It is in this respect Gandhi differs from most other political leaders and social reformers.

What struck Gandhi most was the conflict between people's professed beliefs and their actions. Individuals who believed in charity and good neighborliness did not hesitate to exploit the weak and the helpless. People who abhored violence in resolving conflicts in family situations were loath to condemn and were even willing to cooperate in the large-scale massacre of people in ruthlessly fought wars.

Countries which practiced democracy at home spread colonial rule abroad. Men, it seemed, had come to accept one set of values for themselves and another for others. They did not mind cooperating with the state even when its values differed from theirs.

Gandhi concluded that these glaring inconsistencies were at the root of all social evils. Why these inconsistencies? Why do people harbour such double existences? Is it impossible for an individual to preach what he practices and practice what he believes? Gandhi himself did not think so. Such inconsistencies can be remedied, he felt, and their contradiction resolved when men begin to relate thought and action to a common ideal. There should be no discrepancy between the goals of individual and those of society. What is good for one must be so for the other also. The answers to all of the above questions are grounded in Gandhi's conception of human nature.

10.2 Gandhi on Human Nature

Gandhi was a visionary at heart and an empiricist by instinct. His life is that of an explorer. Gandhi did not claim any originality or finality to his thoughts. He said repeatedly that he was learning from experience and was constantly experimenting. However, several scholars think that he is original in a profound sense. It is significant in this context that those who have sought to understand and expound Gandhi's thought have offered radically different interpretations. Erikson (1969) wrote: "There is nothing more consistent in the views of Gandhi's critics than the accusation of inconsistency: at one time he is accused of sounding like a socialist, and at another a dreamy conservative; or, again, a pacifist and a frantic militarist; a nationalist, and a "communalist"; an anarchist and a devotee of tradition; a Western activist, and an Eastern mysticist; a total religionist and yet so liberal that he could say he saw God even in the atheist's atheism. Did this polymorphous man have a firm center?" (p. 396).

Misunderstandings of Gandhi arise from a failure to appreciate Gandhian hermeneutics and his dialectical methods which help to bring about what appears to be a magical synthesis of opposing perspectives, where contraries coexist without conflict. This is implicit in the very nature of man's being, as we will discuss. Further, Gandhi never sought consistency but truth. In his search for truth he did not hesitate to change his views. The problem is not with inconsistencies in but with interpretation of Gandhi. One would not be properly interpreting Gandhi, if he is simply looking for apparent consistencies. The very ambiguity embedded in them is an indication that they are not mere copies of anything that went before him. In an important sense they are original in that they do not fit into simple categorization as this or that. Take for example, two distinguished Gandhian scholars Basham (1971) and Nandy (1980) who discuss in their own way, Gandhi and the influence of classical Indian thought on him. As Raghuramaraju (2006) so aptly pointed out, Basham suggests that "several of Gandhi's concepts are fully in keeping with

Indian tradition and were probably developed from ideas which he absorbed in his childhood and youth." Nandi shows on the other hand that Gandhi's work is a "part of the process of de-Brahminization through de-intellectualization" and that it has posed a serious threat to traditional authority, a perception which indeed led to his assassination by a Hindu fanatic. Again, there are those like Lannoy (1974) who feel that if there is any influence of others on Gandhi it was that of "English liberal humanists." Also, Gandhi's ideas on machines, science and technology, women, environment, and so on are variously interpreted. This, we believe, is not due to inconsistencies in Gandhi's extensive writings. Rather they were the outcomes of the dialectical method and the experimental approach that Gandhi took.

Gandhi's views on human nature were undoubtedly influenced by his Hindu upbringing and familiarity with classic Indian thought and also by his reading of Western transcendentalists like Thoreau and Ruskin. However, we find in Gandhi a creative blend of the best in the East and the West, tradition and modernity. His thoughts on all the issues he dealt with in his lifelong experiments seem to flow naturally from his conception of human nature and man's destiny, which are indeed inspired by his native ethos, especially his reading of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. The *Gītā* was a lifetime campanion to Gandhi. It was his "spiritual reference book." Interestingly, his first full scale reading of it during 1888–1889 is through its English translation by Edwin Arnold, *The Song Celestial*. He later went on to read the original Sanskrit text and various translations of it; and finally translated it himself later into Gujarati under the title *Anasakti Yoga*. Gandhi's writings on the *Gītā* are extensive (see Anand 2012) and his conception of human nature appears to be derived from the *Gītā*. Therefore, it is not surprising that it is very similar to the model we have sketched in this book.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* is not a psychological treatise, but a religious discourse. However, as we noted in several contexts in this book, the psychological implications of this religious text are obvious and numerous. The *Gītā* emphatically asserts the Sāṁkhya dualism of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*, matter and consciousness. The two are connected in the person with the mediation of the mind—*buddhi* with its affinity to consciousness and the senses by their attraction to material things of the world. In the *Gītā* consciousness is God, the divine in the form of Kṛṣna. Each person is endowed with the divine. The divine is part of the *jīva* and it attracts the mind and the five senses from their place in the *prakṛti* (*Bhagavad Gītā,* Vol. 15, p. 7). The connection between the divine and the natural objects of *prakṛti* is natural. It is, however, tainted by the ego, which distorts the proper flow between them. Therefore, human endeavor entails controlling the ego, which involves more than restraining the flow between the mind and the senses. An attitude of detachment is a necessary condition for controlling the ego. Therefore, Gandhi maintains that the "central thesis of the *Gītā* is detachment." Detachment allows the natural flow between divine consciousness and the material world without distortion.

The basic assumption of Gandhi is that man, though divine, has animal origin. He is instinctively a brute with natural attraction to sensory gratification and selfish desires and attachment. He strives for pleasure. *Pleasure* may be distinguished from *bliss. Pleasure* is sense related. It is evanescent and ephemeral. *Bliss* is more stable

and spiritual, because it is anchored in consciousness. One's pleasure may lead to suffering of others. *Bliss* spreads happiness all around. The person also has a divine spark in him because of his accessibility to consciousness through the *buddhi*. We are men inasmuch as we are awakened by that spark to our true nature as humans. To be divine is to be truly human. "We were, perhaps, all originally brutes," wrote Gandhi. "I am prepared to believe that we have become men by a slow process of evolution from the brute" (Gandhi 1938a, p. 65).

The person is therefore pulled in opposite directions—downward by the brutish impulses and upward by the divine urge to know truth and live truthfully. Truth, for Gandhi, is God Himself. Realization of truth in one's being and experiencing bliss in one's life is the goal of the upward movement. Seeking pleasure, satisfying the instinctive appetites, is the downward slide prompted by our animal origin. Gandhi concedes that the downward descent is the easy course and the upward climb is the more difficult one. Gandhi says, "man must choose either of the two courses, the upward or the downward, but as he has the brute in him, he will more easily choose the downward course than the upward, especially when the downward course is presented to him in a beautiful garb" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 66, p. 98).

The struggle to climb up the ladder of the divine is no other than accessing consciousness as-such seeking truth and realizing it in one's being. It is continuous and may not be stopped until man becomes God, which is an ideal and not something that one achieves in life. The greatest obstacle to the divine ascent is the ego. The ego is the attentional focus that renders the animal appetites attractive and instinctual attachment necessarily desirable. Therefore, the elimination of the ego is the key for opening the doors of the divine. The sense of 'I' and 'mine' are the hurdles that isolate the person from others. Therefore, one must overcome them with determination and by cultivating a sense of detachment. We need in this effort to expand the center of focus from 'I' and 'me' to include all. The divine is what binds one to others. It is what makes one to see others in her and her in others. This becomes increasingly possible by taking away the focus from the ego, which in Gandhi's words is reducing oneself to a zero, to nothingness.

Such a negation of the ego does not, however, constitute denial of individuality. "True individuality," says Gandhi, "consists in reducing onself to a zero" (Desai, Vol. 1, p. 113). This is the central thesis of Gandhi in interpreting the *Gītā* as *Anāsakti Yoga*. *Anāsakti* is nonattachment. Nonattached action is "selfless action." Selfless action is action delinked from the ego. Delinking the ego from action and deliberate refraining from enjoying the fruits of action lead one to reduce herself to a zero or nothingness. The advocacy of nonattached action, action performed without concern for its fruits, is Gandhi's method for eliminating the ego. As Erikson (1969) observed, "nothing is more powerful in the world than *conscious nothingness* if it is paired with the gift of giving and accepting actuality" (p. 397, emphasis added). Actuality refers to what "feels effectively true in action" as distinguished from what is "demonstrably correct."

The description of *sthithaprajña*, the self-realized person, in the last 19 verses of the second chapter of the *Gītā,* was very special to Gandhi. As is well known, for nearly 60 years until his death, he recited them daily during the prayers. These 19

verses contain the quintessence of human nature that Gandhi incorporated into his world view and practiced throughout his mature life. *Sthithaprajña* is the person who has control over the mind and partakes in its stability and tranquility. The mind's tranquility and natural flow toward realization of truth and divinity are disturbed by the sensory attachment to worldly things. One's focus on and indulgence in sensory objects causes attachment to them. Attachment leads to craving and craving to anger. Anger creates delusion and delusion causes loss of memory. Memory loss results in the decrease of one's ability to discriminate and know the truth. From such decay ensues the fall from the path of *self-realization* (*Bhagavad Gītā*, Chap. 2, verses 62–63).

Mind is both a *dharmakshetra* as well as *Kurukshetra,* Gandhi said at a prayer meeting on November 1, 1947. It is an abode of *dharma*, peace, tranquility, and truth (i.e., "temple of God"). It can also be the seat of conflict and become a battlefield once one takes to self-indulgence (CWMG, Vol. 89, p. 452). Those, whose senses are under control and cravings cease, have access to intuitive wisdom and become *sthithaprajña*. A person realizes peace when he relinquishes her desires, extinguishes cravings, and dissociates herself with the ego and its sense of "mine."

Gandhi was a great and effective communicator. He spoke in the simple language of common people. He used religious concepts, but often in a secular context to drive home a secular point. Therefore, the secular and the sacred become mixed, suggesting possible category mistakes. In truth, however, Gandhi makes no distinction between secular and the sacred. The very assertion that truth is God dismisses once and for all any segregation of the two. Gandhi did not write as a philosopher or a psychologist. However, his ideas make much philosophical and psychological sense once we translate them into the appropriate idiom within the relevant conceptual framework. (For a more detailed discussion of Gandhi's views of human nature see Rao 2014d).

10.3 Gandhian Dialectic

The concept of Gandhian dialectic was mooted by Bondurant (1958/1988) to explain Gandhi's political theory. In political theory, ends and means are the two "irreducible essentials." They refer to goals of political action and ways of reaching them. In conflict theory there are two viewpoints in conflict. They may relate to claims made, goals envisaged, interests or values held. The ensuing action is an attempt to reconcile them resulting in a synthesis of the conflicting two. Bondurant's description of Gandhian dialectic appears not only limited to political action, but more importantly it may not be seen as fundamental. Goals and means need not be in conflict. In fact, Gandhi suggested that means are ends in the making and therefore there need be no conflict between them. The dialectic, as Bondurant sees, is not general but limited only to Gandhi's philosophy of conflict.

Gandhian dialectic may be seen differently and in a broader, more inclusive, and profound sense to go beyond political action to encompass the entire gamut of human development. Human development itself, may be seen as a dialectical process. The irreducible opposing structures that govern one's behavior are the brute and the human in her—the devil and divine as pointed out earlier. Human development unfolds in the process of the continuing struggle between animal impulses and human aspirations. Human development may be seen as resulting from the antinomy of the two opposing tendencies in each of us. We struggle to reconcile them resulting in a synthesis of the two. The brute and the human are the two causal structures that underlie human development. The synthesis of the two is not mechanical and predetermined. Rather it is flexible and variable. Humans have freedom to choose the course of development because human volition can profoundly impact on the emerging synthesis of the animal urges and human aspirations. Development therefore can be creatively and constructively driven for one to climb the ladder of self-realization or slip into the abyss of instinctive animal urges (Rao 2014a).

In Gandhi's discourse, the brute and the human, the devil and the divine, signify the dialectic of the actual and the ideal. The actual is the existential matrix constituting the human situation. The human situation in the Indian tradition is seen as one that engenders suffering. The goal therefore is one of overcoming that situation and moving forward toward achieving a blissful state of nonsuffering. The conflict manifests in different forms in different contexts. We therefore find antinomies like good and evil, altruism and egotism, freedom and bondage, truth and falsehood, and love and violence. Gandhi refers to all the above. The prominent among them as ideals are truth and nonviolence. His lifelong experiments were attempts at studying ways of reaching the ideals of truth and nonviolence (see Rao 2014c).

In Gandhi's conception, man is both good and evil. There is the divine and the beast in him as we have noted. The divine enables him to realize God, Truth in his being. Inasmuch as God is Truth, the struggle to realize God is embedded in his striving to realize truth. God-realization is Truth-realization; and Truth-realization is *self-realization*. The beast in man drives him to indulge in sensory gratification. The ego emerges as the mechanism to channel the demands of sensory gratification in acceptable ways in the surrounding reality. Truth then gets distorted in one's perception. Morality takes the back seat as pleasure-seeking comes to the fore. The beast in him makes one a slave to habits whereas the divine enables him to exercise his volition to cultivate virtues. The beast in man makes him bound and conditioned; the divine sets him free. The beast struggles for existence. Man gets mired in competition, exploitation, and consequent violence. The divine seeks liberation, makes one altruist in pursuit of serving others instead of self-seeking. "Man's estate is one of probation," observed Gandhi. "During that period he is played upon by evil forces as well as good. He is ever a prey to temptations. He has to prove his manliness by resisting and fighting temptations" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 68, p. 345). Here manliness represents for Gandhi the human aspect as distinguished from the brute in him. Each person has to choose for herself whether to follow the "law of the jungle" or "the law of humanity." Gandhi draws attention to "how repugnant it

must be to invoke the beast in any human being" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 54, p. 3). The divinity in a person manifests in proportion to the realization of the true human within.

The beast in man is instinctual, and the divine is to be sought and cultivated. Our pursuit is to cultivate the human and control the animal instincts. The goal is *self-realization*. The true *self* is one's human side, which is the same in all. Consequently, the distinctions/discriminations we make among people on the basis of caste, color, creed, etc. are untenable in the final analysis. Equally unacceptable are any kind of exploitation of others for personal benefit, violence as a means of conflict resolution, and claims of superiority of one kind or another. Altruism is the sine qua non of the spiritual in humans. Gandhi wrote:

> Man is worse than the brute, so long as he is selfish and indifferent to the happiness of others. He rises above the level of the brute, when he begins to work for the welfare of his family. He rises higher in the scale when he comes to look upon the whole community or race as his own family. He becomes greater still when he begins to regard even the so-called barbarous races as the members of his own family. In other words, man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he works for the welfare of his fellow-men. (1922, p. 58)

The ego creates artificial identity, which is among the prime sources of conflict. Altruism enables one to expand one's identity beyond the ego-bound self to the common *self* that binds us all as humans. The mature life of the Mahātmā is but a series of experiments to perfect instrumentalities that would enable one to expand his identity beyond the personal self to include others, whether they are friends or foes. Through these experiments Gandhi discovered several principles and methods of actualizing those principles in life. Among these are Truth and Nonviolence.

10.4 Truth

Truth is the central principle that runs through various facets of Gandhian thought. It is also the core concern of classical Indian thought. Truth (*satya*) is derived from the root *sat*, which means that which is real. The aim of human endeavor is to move toward truth and realize it in one's being. As the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* exhorts "lead me from the unreal (*asat*) to the real (*sat*)." "I am an *anekantavadi,*" wrote Gandhi to his son Devadas on March 5, 1922. "It has been my experience that I am always true from my point of view, and am often wrong from the point of view of my honest critics. I know that we are both right from our respective points of view. And this knowledge saves me from attributing motives to my opponents or critics. The seven blind men who gave seven different descriptions of the elephant were all right from their respective points of view, and wrong from the point of view of one another, and right and wrong from the point of view of the man who knew the elephant. I very much like this doctrine of the manyness of reality" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 23, pp. 18–19). Thus while striving for truth Gandhi recognizes that truth appears variously. Here then is the crux of the problem. How can we search for and

find Truth, which is considered absolute and unvarying, if truth appears differently to different people? How can we reconcile the absolute and relative aspects of truth, especially if truth-seeking is the ultimate goal, indeed the essence of all human endeavor?

Gandhi did not claim that he found truth, only a way to it. The search for truth had become for him a search to find a method to seek truth. "I am but a seeker after truth," wrote Gandhi. "I claim to have found a way to it. I claim to be making a ceaseless effort to find it. But I admit that I have not yet found it. To find Truth completely is to realize oneself and one's destiny, i.e., to become perfect" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 25, pp. 120–121). Further, Gandhi says, "I claim to be a votary of truth from my childhood. It was the most natural thing to me." (CWMG 2001, Vol. 83, p. 163). Truth with capital 'T,' then, is absolute Truth, the goal of human quest. The lower case 't' represents what one encounters in life; it is truth contextualized, i.e., truth in actuality.

With these multiple connotations, what then is the Truth? Conceding that it is a difficult question, Gandhi says:

> I have solved it for myself by saying that it is what the voice within tells you. How, then, you ask, different people think of different and contrary truths? Well, seeing that the human mind works through innumerable media and that the evolution of the human mind is not the same for all, it follows that what may be truth for one may be untruth for another, and hence those who have made these experiments have come to the conclusion that there are certain conditions to be observed in making those experiments. Just as for conducting scientific experiments there is an indispensable scientific course of instruction, in the same way strict preliminary discipline is necessary to qualify a person to make experiments in the spiritual realm. Everyone should, therefore, realize his limitations before he speaks of his Inner Voice. Therefore we have the belief based upon experience, that those who would make individual search after Truth as God, must go through several vows, as for instance, the vow of truth, the vow of *brahmacharya* (purity) – for you cannot possibly divide your love for Truth and God with anything else – the vow of non-violence, of poverty and non-possession. Unless you impose on yourselves the five vows you may not embark on the experiment at all. There are several other conditions prescribed, but I must not take you through all of them. Suffice it to say that those who have made these experiments know that it is not proper for everyone to claim to hear the voice of conscience, and it is because we have at the present moment everybody claiming the right of conscience without going through any discipline whatsoever and there is so much untruth being delivered to a bewildered world. All that I can, in true humility, present to you is that truth is not to be found by anybody who has not got an abundant sense of humility. If you would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth you must reduce yourself to a zero. (CWMG 2001, Vol. 54, pp. 268–269)

Truth-realization is the goal of human quest. Therefore, Gandhi asserts, "all our activities should be centred in Truth. Truth should be the very breadth of our life." Truth-seeking is not merely a cognitive exercise. According to Gandhi, it has a wider scope. Truth should manifest in thought as well as in speech and action. How may we realize Truth in the threefold sense? Gandhi refers back to the twin principles of yoga as they find their full expression in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, single-minded devotion and practice, *abhyāsa,* and *vairāgya,* detachment from and indifference to all other interests in life while pursuing truth. This becomes possible

only when one reduces herself to a zero and nothingness, leading to a state of perfect purity. "To attain perfect purity one has to become absolutely passion-free in thought, speech and action; to rise above the opposite currents of love and hate, attachment and repulsion."

We may recall that Gandhi shares the Advaita assumptions that the goal of human endeavor is Self-realization and that the Self in ultimate analysis is the one that binds us all. *Self-realization* in Gandhi is equated with truth-realization. Truth is also equated with Love and God. Truth in an absolute sense is inconceivable; and yet it is undeniable. What is inconceivable is obviously inaccessible. What is accessible, however, is relative truth. It is "what the voice within tells you." But what *my* "inner" voice tells may be different from what you hear from *your* "inner" voice. This is the existential predicament. In order to overcome the predicament one needs to do two things. First, one should be open to the possibility that what one holds as truth may not be so. Therefore, she should be ready to correct herself. Second, the person seeking truth must undergo self-discipline that eliminates biases, prejudices, and other factors that distort truth and thus reduce the gap between *the* Truth and *a* truth, i.e., the real truth and what appears to be true. In order to be receptive to truth one should attempt "to reduce oneself to a zero." Given that the *self,* the seat of awareness, is shared by us all at the primary level, once all the personal biases, dispositions, and predilections are removed, truth will appear alike to all.

While human existence is grounded in truth, which manifests as love, we also find in the person an opposing impulse that of the brute. This engenders conflict and moves the person away from truth and love toward hate and violence. This is the conflict or the "duel" between the divine and the devil, between consciousness of the spirit and the pull of sensory appetites and selfishness of the body. Gandhi likens the conflict to the *Kurukṣetra* where the battle of good and evil was waged. It is a battle between altruism/self-sacrifice and selfishness and greed, between loving others and self-love. In Gandhi's view, body is indeed the prison house that locks up the genuine human spirit. At the same time, he suggests that the body can also be used as a gateway to find freedom of the spirit. If the body can be dissociated from its self-centeredness and made to undertake selfless service, one gets closer to finding the Truth and the spiritual being in her. Selfless service promotes love for others. Love for others enables one to endure suffering. As Gandhi puts it: "Joy comes not out of infliction of pain on others but out of pain voluntarily borne by oneself" (1955, p. 26).

10.5 Nonviolence

This leads Gandhi to assert that nonviolence is the twin principle of Truth. "Ahimsā and Truth," wrote Gandhi, "are my two lungs. I cannot live without them" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 26, p. 391). According to him, "without ahimsā it is not possible to seek and find Truth." Ahimsā and Truth are so intertwined that it is

practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are "like two sides of coin…. ahimsā is the means; Truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach and so ahimsā is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later" (Gandhi 1955/2013, p. 28).

Now, what does Gandhi mean when he says that nonviolence is the means to reach the goal of truth? It is not obvious that by merely abstaining from injuring others that one reaches truth. Nonviolence encompasses more than simply abstaining from injuring others. Gandhi wrote: "Ahimsa is not the crude thing it has been made to appear. Not to hurt any living thing is, no doubt, a part of ahimsa. But it is its least expression. The principle of ahimsa is hurt by every evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody. It is also violated by our holding on to what the world needs" (ibid.).

Nonviolence involves resisting all kinds of injustice, including social injustice. "No man could be actively nonviolent and not rise against social injustice no matter where it occurred" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 78, p. 144). Further, it is no nonviolence "if we merely love those who love us. It is nonviolence only when we love those that hate us" (Bose 1948, p. 17). This is indeed difficult to do. Therefore, practice of nonviolence is not for the weak. It requires more courage than any act of violence. Gandhi repeatedly said that fleeing from aggression is not nonviolence. In fact fighting even when it involves violence is preferable to fleeing in the face of injustice and violence. "Nonviolence does not admit of running away from danger…. Between violence and cowardly flight, I can only prefer violence. I can no more preach nonviolence to a coward than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy health scenes. Nonviolence is the summit of bravery" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 28, p. 49).

Gandhi's concept of nonviolence has two dimensions. The first is the usual sense of abstaining from violence. It may also be seen in resisting violence passively by such acts as noncooperation. This may be considered the nonviolence of the *weak*. The second dimension of nonviolence involves the generation of active force by observance and practice of nonviolence. This is the nonviolence of the *strong* generated by personal transformation achieved through suffering and love. It is what Erikson (1970) called "militant nonviolence." Here nonviolence involves unconditional love for others and voluntary suffering in practising truth and resisting what one considers to be injustice and falsehood. In this sense, nonviolence is more than a virtue to which a person subscribes. It is a force that transforms the person as well as those around her. Practice of nonviolence in this sense may be called Yoga of Nonviolence. Like Patañjali, Gandhi considered *vairāgya* (nonattachment to the ego) as an essential condition for practising nonviolence. "The greatest endeavour," says Gandhi, echoing Patañjali, "is endeavour for *moksha*" and "*moksha* means elimination of ego" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 82, p. 7). Again, like Patañjali, Gandhi endorsed the five vows of nonviolence, truth, nonpossession, nonstealing, and *brahmacharya* (celibacy and life of self-restraint) as preconditions for practising strong nonviolence. "Elimination of the ego" is none other than "reducing oneself to a zero or nonexistence."

"Reducing oneself to a zero" may not be construed, however, to mean abstaining from all action. On the contrary, it means active participation in life. In Gandhi's interpretation of the *Gītā* as *Anāsakti Yoga*, selfless action, i.e., action without ego-involvement, takes center-stage. As in Indian psychology, the goal of life is *self-realization* and not simple ego-adjustment. *Self* is different from the ego in that *self*, unlike the ego, is not an isolated identity, but a shared identity with others. "I believe in Advaita", wrote Gandhi. "I believe in the essential unity of man and, for that matter, of all that lives. Therefore, I believe that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 29, p. 408).

Selfless action is action without ego-involvement, action devoid of desires for personal gratification (*niṣkāma karma*). It is action meant for common good. It is in a word altruism. It is *karma* (action) that follows *dharma* (duty). *Dharma* is the moral imperative. It is that which tells us what to do. "Dharma is a quality of the soul and is present, visibly or invisibly, in every human being. Through it we know our duty in human life and our true relation with other souls" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 32, p. 11).

When we speak of the common good, good becomes more an ideal than actual. Therefore, the entire enterprise of seeking *dharma* and serving common good may become too ambiguous, nebulous, and impractical to guide us, like the Truth we seek. There is then the need to contextualize *dharma*. In this context Gandhi introduces *swadeshi* and *swadharma* as collateral principles for *dharma* per se. *Swadharma* is implied in the ideal of *niṣkāma karma* in the *Gītā*. It asserts one's duty as a member of a community, group, and family, recognizing the value of social loyalty over self-interest. *Swadeshi,* according to Gandhi "is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote" (Gandhi 1955, p. lvi). Therefore, a "man's first duty is to his neighbour" (ibid.). Gandhi's emphasis on village republics (*grām panchāyats*) is an extension of the *swadeshi* principle. *Swadharma* is again contextualization of *dharma.* It asserts that one's duties are not fixed but relative to the person and her stage in life.

Briefly, then, Gandhi's conception of human nature is that man has both the brute and the divine in him. The person is the battle field of good and evil; and because of this the integrity of the person is compromised and he is alienated from truth. The brute manifests in the form of animal instinctive tendencies that lead one to indulge in sensory pleasures and seek ego gratification, even at the cost of exploiting/hurting others. But then, there is also a divine streak in man. In fact, it is man's inner nature. It leads him to reach out to others, love them, and take pleasure in theirs. It makes people pursue truth and realize it in their being. Truth is indeed God. This divine streak is what is truly human. Its realization in one's life is the goal. Such a realization may be called self-realization because the spark behind the divine streak is the true self, which is shared by all humans. Self-realization is essentially truth-realization. It is achieved by adherence to nonviolence. Truth is the goal and nonviolence is the means. Both "Truth" and "Nonviolence" are essentially ideals in the absolute sense. However, they become relative when contextualized.

In contextualizing Truth and Nonviolence, Gandhi through his lifelong experimentation has arrived at certain principles which we find in Gandhian practices. These include *swadeshi* and *swadharma, swaraj,* and above all, *satyāgraha*.

The above conception of human nature is consistent on the one hand with the basic postulates of Indian psychology and the model of the person we presented in the previous chapters of the book. On the other hand, it is at significant variance from the Western model which conceptualizes the person as a brain-driven machine.

It hardly needs any elaboration or emphasis to highlight how the Gandhian conception of human nature is entirely consistent with the basic postulates of Indian psychology. This is not surprising because Indian psychology is a derivative of classical Indian thought and Gandhi himself was greatly influenced by the *Bhagavad Gītā* and Yoga system which are also the springs that fill the flowing stream of psychological thought in India. As often mentioned, Gandhi used the potent native concepts and contextualized to make them relevant to the contemporary conditions. The same appears quite appropriate for understanding Gandhi's conception of human nature. Truth, which is the basic postulate in Gandhi's thought in general, refers to consciousness in the context of psychology. In its absolute sense, the ideal Truth is consciousness as-such in Indian psychological thought. We may also, like Gandhi, who referred to Truth in absolute sense with capital letter 'T,' refer to consciousness as-such with capital 'C.' Realization of Truth is the goal of human endeavor according to Gandhi. This is not different from the goal of person in Indian psychology which is realization of Consciousness. In both cases it is called *self-realization* because it is the common Self that binds all humans. Truth/Consciousness is the essence of the Self. Contextualized, both consciousness and truth take different forms in their actual manifestation.

Now what Gandhi refers to as the "brute" in humans is what we labeled as the body in our conception of the person as a composite of consciousness+mind+body. Mind refers to rational/social (collective thinking) in Gandhi, which again occupies an intermediary position between the human/divine search for Truth at one end, and the animal, instinctive urges at the other. It is what links Truth to truth, the absolute to the concrete. There is the eternal duel between the animal and the human in us. We need to overcome the brute and give the human the rightful place in our beliefs and behavior. "Human nature finds itself," Gandhi wrote, "when it fully realizes that to be human it has to cease to be beastly and brutal" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 67, p. 414). This assertion by Gandhi is no different from the emphasis in Indian psychology on gaining voluntary control over sensory functions.

Gandhi's conception of human nature is quite in contrast from the Western thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes. Gandhi shared the assumption that people often act like beasts and seek to satisfy their hedonistic desires and sensory appetites. However, Gandhi suggests that what is truly human is not this, but altruism and pursuit of common good. Gandhi's altruism is more than Western utilitarian notion. "A votary of ahimsa," Gandhi says, "cannot subscribe to the utilitarian formula (of the greatest good for the greatest number). He will strive for the greatest good of all and die in the attempt to realize the ideal. He will, therefore, be willing to die,

so that others may live" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 37, p. 381). The goal of human endeavor is not power and dominance over others but love and sharing. It is not the assertion but denial of the ego. Again, violence is a part of us; yet, it is not the human in us, which is nonviolence. Nonviolence is something we can cultivate to control violence. What is even more interesting is that Gandhi was not content in merely stating principles. He was an applied social scientist. He attempted to develop techniques to put the principles into practice. In doing this, he followed an experimental model like a scientist testing his ideas. *Satyagraha* is one of them.

10.6 *Satyāgraha*: A Psycho-Spiritual Tool for Conflict Resolution

In the course of search for truth and his experiments to apply nonviolence to resolve all kinds of conflict, Gandhi developed and practiced the justly famous *satyāgraha* technique. As early as in 1908, in his *Indian Home Rule*, (*Hind Swaraj*), Gandhi expressed the need to practice nonviolence in politics.

What is *satyāgraha*? How does it work? *Satyāgraha,* as Gandhi designed it, involves total adherence to truth and nonviolence. In Gandhi's words: "*Satyāgraha* is literally holding on to Truth and it means, therefore, Truth-force. It excludes the use of violence because man is not capable of knowing absolute truth and, therefore, not competent to punish" those holding contrary views.

Satyāgraha in practice is nonviolent action to resolve social and political conflicts. It may take a number of forms such as noncooperation, civil disobedience, and fasting depending upon the nature of the conflict situation. Gandhi has not prescribed a set theory to go by; and he has repeatedly emphasized that his techniques are essentially experimental in character. The basic assumption underlying *satyāgraha* is that it is possible to bring about personal transformation and to generate extensive social action through the practice of nonviolence. Nonviolent action helps to transform the individual as well as the society in the cause of truth. *Satyāgraha* brings the one who practices it and those against whom it is waged closer to truth. The action engendered by nonviolent techniques is far superior to action involving violent means because in the latter case the solution is attended with undesirable consequences that are often beyond the control of the acting agent. Gandhi does not, however, explicitly state how nonviolent action brings this miraculous transformation in the opponent. However, the actual operation of *satyāgraha*, whatever may be its mysterious force, would seem to involve delicate and humane modes of communication and conversion.

As mentioned, Gandhi believed that "there is something in man which is superior to the brute force in him, and that the latter always yields to it" (Gandhi 1927, p. 369). Consequently, social and political conflicts can be resolved by appealing to the good nature in people, and *satyāgraha,* according to Gandhi, is the technique which precisely serves this function. When applied to politics, *satyāgraha* assumes "that

government of the people is possible only as they consent either consciously or unconsciously to be governed (ibid.)." Gandhi tells us that when he, with other Indians in South Africa, opposed the Asiatic Act of 1907, two courses of action were open to them. One was to rebel violently against the authority imposing the Act, and the other was "to suffer the penalties prescribed under the Act, and thus to draw out and exhibit the force of the soul within us for a period long enough to appeal to the sympathetic chord in the governors or the law-makers (ibid.)." Gandhi chose the latter. He attributed his success in getting the Asiatic Act repealed to the effectiveness of *satyāgraha* in appealing to the "sympathetic chord" of the opponent. But how such an appeal translates itself in practical terms, Gandhi does not explicitly explain.

Gandhi distinguishes *satyāgraha* from what is commonly known as passive resistance. It "is not a passive state," Gandhi argues, "it is an intensely active state —more active than physical resistance or violence (CWMG 2001, Vol. 21, p. 200)." Passive resistance does not prohibit the use of arms on suitable occasions. It also entails the idea of harassing the opponent, while in *satyāgraha* physical force is forbidden at all times, and injury to the adversary under any circumstance is regarded as a positive violation of its basic principle. "Satyagraha postulates the conquest of the adversary by suffering in one's own person" (Bose 1948). The basic intent of nonviolent action is *conversion* and not *coercion*. For the *satyāgrahi* never attacks men but measures and systems. The method of the *satyāgrahi* is therefore "conversion by gentle persuasion" (Gandhi 1921, p. 306).

The operation of *satyāgraha* in the political field took two important forms—noncooperation and civil disobedience. Noncooperation is refusal to cooperate with any act believed to be unjust and untrue, and with those who are responsible for it. It is the responsibility of the citizen, according to Gandhi, to withdraw his support to the government if it pursues policies that hurt him and his nation. Noncooperation "is the method to refuse to be party to the wrong" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 20, p. 392). Civil disobedience is the direct and voluntary contravention of such laws and regulations which one believes to be unjust and oppressive. It is a nonviolent rebellion and involves a positive violation of the unjust law and the readiness to suffer the penalties imposed by the state for such violations. The *satyāgrahi*, for example, may court imprisonment by refusing to pay taxes. Gandhi believes that when people thus begin to "disown" the state, the government begins to wither away.

Noncooperation and civil disobedience come, in fact, at a later stage in the *satyāgraha* process. Only when negotiation, arbitration, and constitutional and legal agitation fail to resolve the conflict recourse to *satyāgraha* may be taken. Before launching *satyāgraha* one must be sure that the problem calls for it and that the participants are ready to pursue it. For a miscalculation on the part of the initiators may lead, according to Gandhi, to disastrous consequences.

"Since satyagraha is one of the most powerful methods of direct action, a satyagrahi exhausts all other means before he resorts to satyagraha. He will therefore constantly and continually approach the constituted authority, he will appeal to public opinion, educate public opinion, state his case calmly and coolly before everybody, who wants to listen to him, and only after he has exhausted all these avenues will he resort to satyagraha" (Bose 1948, p. 197).

Sometimes the conflicts may be accentuated by the refusal of an authority to communicate with the people or by a genuine conflict of values between the authority and the people. In such instances, Gandhi argues, it is possible by pursuing the nonviolent technique, first, to make the authority realize the need to communicate and, second, to provide an objective basis to judge whether there is a genuine conflict of values. This is possible because, according to Gandhi, all values have their origin in the concept of common good, and because all men are essentially good. The basic assumption here is that in the final analysis there can be no genuine conflict of interests or of conflict of values among enlightened parties. Values in their absolute sense are universal. Inasmuch as humans by their very nature are altruist, there can be no conflict of interests between them. What is good for one is also good for the other. However, in the existential condition, when values are contextualized and individual interests come to the fore, there is scope for conflicts. These can be best solved by exploring the connection between the ideal and the actual, whether the latter is genuinely or spuriously related to the ideal.

The resolution of a problem may be brought about through violent means. The adversary may be subjected to coercion so that he may yield to the demands. But what guarantee is there that the demands are morally right? Wars may solve conflicts between nations, and bloody revolutions may put an end to the friction between the rulers and the ruled. Is there an intrinsic guarantee that such fighting results in the victory for the right cause? Can anyone maintain that all violent revolutions yield good and desired results? Gandhi argues that changes and solutions brought about by *satyāgraha* are necessarily good. For *satyāgraha* involves the suffering not on the part of the adversary but on the part of the *satyāgrahi*. The extent of readiness and ability to suffer without inflicting the same on his opponent is proportional to the justice of the cause.

For Gandhi, *satyāgraha* is "the moral equivalent of war" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 54, p. 47) a phrase used by James (1910) in his celebrated essay bearing that title. It is not known if Gandhi ever read this article. *Satyāgraha* and preparing onself to be a *satyāgrahi* essentially address the same issues raised by James in the above article. Gandhi goes beyond James, however, offering significant solutions to issues raised by the latter. For instance, James asked: If war does serve some deep-seated human needs such as "pure pugnacity and love of glory," can we channel them for more constructive and less destructive purposes? Can the so-called "martial virtues" be turned into "enduring cement" to build peaceful societies? Gandhi's *satyāgraha* addresses these issues in a positive and constructive manner. Cultivation of courage to suffer and endure hardships in defense of truth and righteous cause is a way of "channelling the martial virtues" to operate in nonviolent action.

Gandhi observes that up to 1906 in his agitation in South Africa he relied simply on appealing to reason which produced no results. He realized that mere argument was not enough to communicate one's claims. Moreover, people became excited by the continued indifference of the governors and began to talk about taking vengeance by armed revolt. Gandhi was then forced to devise a method that would

not only communicate the claims nonviolently, but would also provide a healthy outlet to the "war-like" instincts in the people. "Thus came into being the moral equivalent of war (CWMG 2001, Vol. 54, p. 47)."

Satyāgraha, like war, presupposes a great deal of hardiness and discipline on the part of those engaged in it. It is not something to be used by those who lack courage. "My creed of nonviolence," says Gandhi, "is an extremely active force. It has no room for cowardice or weakness" (Gandhi 1927). At times of war, men know what suffering is like and how to face it. *Satyāgraha* presupposes one's ability to suffer, and suffering is indeed the central principle of *satyāgrahic* action. Like war, *satyāgraha* also carries a romantic appeal for heroism and provides an opportunity to display courage and endure hardships. Thus, as a social tool to preserve martial virtues without war, *satyāgraha*, Gandhi believed, can be effectively employed. *Satyāgraha* is also an alternative to war because, like war, it is a mode of social action directed toward resolution of political and social conflicts within and between communities. Just as war serves as an instrument to stir into action those forces that do not respond to reason, so is *satyāgraha,* a means of stimulating action when reason fails to produce an impression. However, the solution brought about by war is not based on the understanding and appreciation of truth, what is morally right and desirable. Further, solutions by war are temporary and will last only as long as force retains its hold. Nonviolent solutions, however, are based on understanding truth; therefore, they endure without disruption by extraneous influences. Even when the *satyāgrahi's* appeal is directed at people's emotions, action is always guided by intelligence, reason, values and, above all, truth. For the solution is based on persuasion and communication of truth, not on compulsion and coersion.

Granting that *satyāgraha* could be successfully employed in the resolution of conflicts, how can we meaningfully explain the magical transformation in the opponent from adamant indifference to ready acceptance of the *satyāgrahi's* claims? Since its inception, *satyāgraha* gathered an air of mystery about it and Gandhi furthered this aura by calling it "soul-force." Soul-force is, for Gandhi, truth-force. This would seem to indicate nothing but a simple faith that truth ultimately triumphs. But how and why does truth triumph? Only when it is made known. And so the whole process of *satyāgraha* seems to be an attempt to expose the opponent to the persistent demands of truth and thus try to communicate the validity of his claims. This is a general line of thought, consistent with common sense.

Conflicts are often due to a lack of communication precipitated by one's biases and defenses. Nonviolent direct action involved in *satyāgraha* is a means of making the opponent aware of the *satyāgrahi's* problems and claims. The initial stages of *satyāgraha,* such as sending petitions and conducting negotiations with the opponent, are precisely the attempts to communicate one's claims and problems. Failing this, the *satyāgrahi* mobilizes public opinion which is again communication within the group. He may call for a strike or refuse to pay taxes. Noncooperation presumably makes the opponent aware of the need for cooperation with his adversaries and he may be led to communicate with him so as to find a solution. If both the

parties still fail to come to an agreement, it can still be interpreted as a failure to properly communicate. While this may be so for various reasons, ultimately the failure may be traced to a conflict of interests and values between the two parties. What one holds to be valuable may not seem to be so by the other. It becomes therefore imperative for the one who is at a disadvantage to do whatever he can to communicate to his adversary the genuineness of his claims and values. This he can do only by suffering the consequences of his opponent's acts long enough for the opponent to realize the validity of the claims being made.

The very process of *satyāgraha* is such that the *satyāgrahi* is from the start ready to communicate with the adversary and expects to suffer in the process. The suffering involved in the course of *satyāgraha* makes him, on the one hand, to see the opponent's point of view more fully and thoroughly than otherwise and on the other hand, helps the adversary understand the reason, genuineness, and legitimacy of the *satyāgrahi's* claims. One may doubt if a communication device such as *satyāgraha* would persuade the opponent; but should *satyāgraha* succeed it cannot be denied that the success is due to this new communication device.

This is only one side of the interpretation. It is questionable, however, that all conflicts can be resolved by *satyāgraha*, if *satyāgraha* is no more than a strategy to facilitate rational communication between adversaries. We all know that there is an existential divide between cognition and conduct, between knowing and behaving. Most people who smoke know that smoking is bad for their health. All of us subscribe to the ethic that lying is not right, yet almost everyone lies, some less frequently perhaps than others. It follows that communicating truth and what is right does not always ensure that people behave truthfully and do what is right. Something more may be required to bridge the gap between knowing and behaving and close the divide between cognition and conduct. There is much in Gandhiji's writings suggesting that *satyāgraha* and nonviolence practised with utmost sincerity and strict discipline could help not only in facilitating rational communication between the two conflicting parties and communicating truth, but also to bridge the existential divide between knowing and being. The "soul-force" that Gandhi often referred to may be just that.

The central postulate of the extended interpretation of *satyāgraha* is that it generates "soul-force," which means that it is capable of not only informing people what truth is but also transforming them to act truthfully. This would be possible only in an environment of nonviolence. Nonviolent direct action like *satyāgraha* not only disarms the defenses of the adversary and opens him up to receive the message of the opponent and its truthfulness but it also impels him to act in consonance with truth.

The seeds of the above notion may be found in Yoga and meditation. Meditation is not merely a technique of stress reduction in the practitioner, but it has transformational consequences that are believed to go beyond the meditator. A consummate meditator not only transforms himself but also others around them. This belief has roots in Indian tradition. People like Ramana Maharshi and Ramakrishna Paramahamsa are known to have exerted such an influence on those who visited them.

Gandhi makes a marked distinction between nonviolence of the weak and that of the strong and also between suppression of violence and the practice of nonviolence, as mentioned earlier. Nonviolence of the weak is limited to refraining from acts of violence, whereas in the nonviolence of the strong, there is actual proactive practice of nonviolence born of self-conviction. The latter is manifested, not only in the outward practices, but also in inner transformation of the *satyāgrahi*. In other words, nonviolence of the strong kind is not merely a belief system and a set of prescribed practices but an aspect of one's being itself. Practice of nonviolence is more than suppression of violence in one's behavior in that it is more than cognitively apprehended appreciation of virtues of nonviolence. It is nonviolence in thought and action incorporated into the mindset of the person and therefore has become a way of life for her. It seems to presuppose the development of a certain level of spiritual maturity on the part of the person practising nonviolence, as it appears to be the case with a practising yogin endowed with miraculous powers (*siddhis*).

According to Gandhi, humans function at different levels—biophysical, psychosocial, and spiritual. Consequently, the matter of controlling violence needs to be carried out at different levels. At the physical level, in addition to the security networks such as the police, we need to ensure that the physical and biological factors contributing to violence are addressed. For example, deprivations and discriminations of all kinds are significant contributory factors for the outburst of violence at the level of the individual as well as the group. Taking care of them, however, though necessary, will not be sufficient to stamp out violence. At the psychological level, there are known principles that one could use to channel and check violence. Those forms of violence that are learned and to which one is conditioned can be modified by suitable deconditioning processes. One may learn to suppress violence in one self. This works only to a degree. Continued or automatic suppression of violence becomes repressive. Repressed violence is bound to explode sooner or later unless it is sublimated in some ways.

The most effective way to preempt violence by oneself is to cultivate its opposite, which is love. Patañjali in his *Yoga Sūtras* specifically prescribes this mode to overcome the hurdles in the way of reaching *self-realization*. Violence is indeed one hurdle that Patañjali mentions as something to be controlled by cultivating its opposite. Gandhi appears to have been influenced by Yoga in his uncompromising advocacy of love/nonviolence as an antidote to violence, which is considered a vice and an impediment for *self-realization* and common good, which are the very goals of human endeavor. Gandhi strongly believed that violence may be conquered by conscientious practice of love and compassion. Thus, cultivating an altruistic attitude through education and upbringing can be helpful in mitigating the occurrence of violence at the psychological level.

Finally, violence can be eradicated at the spiritual level. Spiritualization of the human condition is indeed a sure-fire solution for containing violence. Spiritualization raises humans to a higher level of being. Mahātma Gandhi has shown us some ways of accomplishing this. According to him, spiritualization is feasible and practical even in the contemporary world. Gandhi says that intellectual

force is superior to physical force and that spiritual force is superior to intellectual force (CWMG, Vol. 9, p. 115). In the final analysis, the way to *realize* the *self* is to practice nonviolence (CWMG 2001, Vol. 30, p. 425).

In Gandhi's writings spiritual stands for different things at different levels of discourse. However, a discerning reader would find a running thread that embraces them all. At the ethical level, spiritual means for Gandhi altruism. At the epistemological level, spiritual refers to transcognitive knowing and being. His "inner voice" is one of them. Gandhi tells us that when reason did not give a convincing answer to the problem on hand, he had consulted his inner voice and benefitted much from it. At the ontological level, it is the unity of all. One's identity goes beyond the individual self to embrace all. It signifies the interconnectedness of all that exists. At a theological level spiritual involves faith in God and religion. In Gandhi's thought, these different senses pose no contradictions or inconsistencies, as a hurried reading of his writings might suggest. They are interlinked in significant ways. What is interesting is that Gandhi would have no problem if one restricts the spiritual to only one sense and ignores the rest. For Gandhi, Truth is God; and therefore even atheists could not object to that. As it happens, some people with strong atheistic persuasions are devoted followers of Gandhi and strong adherents of his ideas and practices.

Violence is the instrument of the ego. Nonviolence is the attribute of human conscience. Suffering on one's own person, instead of inflicting on others, awakes conscience. The way it works may be similar to the "magical" manifestations following practice of Yoga. In Yoga, ignorance (*avidyā*) and the ego are the two mitigating factors that one needs to overcome in his path of psycho-spiritual development. The same appears to hold in Gandhi's *satyāgraha* as well. Truth is the insight into the nature of the conflict and nonviolence is the means to effect its resolution.

10.7 Psychoanalysis and *Satyāgraha*

Interestingly, psychoanalytical theory and the Gandhian conception of human mind appear to be surprisingly similar in some significant respects. It is, however, true that there is little in the public mind that associates Mahātma Gandhi with Sigmund Freud, the founder-patriarch of psychoanalysis. While Freud's name is associated with the emphasis on the sex drive in human behavior, Gandhi is revered for extolling the virtue of *bramhacharya,* celibacy, and self-control. The connection between Gandhi and psychoanalysis, therefore, appears tenuous. Further, psychoanalysis deals with intrapsychic conflicts and their resolution at the level of the person. In Gandhi's experiments, *satyāgraha*, however, is applied almost exclusively for resolving social and political conflicts between individuals and between groups. The above differences do not, however, preclude possible commonalities and mutual reinforcements between Gandhi's thoughts and practices on the one hand and psychoanalysis on the other. First, there is no fundamental contradiction

between the psychoanalytical postulate that humans are driven primarily by sex drive and the notion that self-control and refraining from sex activity are a precondition for one's growth as an altruist being. Second, from the Gandhian perspective, there is no sharp dichotomy between individual and group/society. Indeed, they are considered to be reflexive of each other.

In Freud, the person has a three-tier structure in id, ego, and superego. Much of this structure is hidden in the unconscious layers of one's personality. What actually surfaces is like the tip of the iceberg. The id is the primary energy source. Closely linked to biological processes, it constitutes the core of personality. Id is driven by the *pleasure principle*, which seeks satisfaction of instinctual impulses and wishes. These impulses and wishes in Freud's view emanate primarily by sex-related and aggressive dispositions inlaid in the person as instinctive tendencies. The behavior of the person at the level of the id is guided by what Freud calls "primary process thinking," which addresses the above instinctual urges independent of attendant reality.

The ego is a developed portion of the id. It results from the manifest conflicts between instinctual urges and the reality constraints placed on them and serves the survival need of the organism in their resolution. The ego unlike the id is in direct contact with reality outside. It is concerned with the safety and survival of the person by reconciling the instinctual urges with external constraints and demands. The ego is governed by the *reality principle*, which moderates and modulates the instinctual wishes in the light of the demands of the actual world outside. Reality principle is steered by what Freud calls "secondary process thinking," which involves such reality-oriented cognitive processes as logical thinking and rational planning.

The third tier in a person's psychic structure is the superego, which again is a development of the id. The superego incorporates within it the moral standards and cultural beliefs of the society. According to Freud, it is the agency that internalizes the parental influences on the child. "In so far as this superego is differentiated from the ego or is opposed to it, it constitutes a third power which the ego must take into account" (Freud 1933, p. 2). The superego functions as a source of self-control and leads the person to refrain from doing "bad" and "evil" things. Whereas the id constantly strives to seek pleasure by attempting to satisfy the sexual and aggression urges, and the ego does reality testing, the superego drives the person toward shared values and social concerns. There is a constant conflict and struggle between the instinctual urges of the id and the norms set by the super ego that creates tensions and anxieties. The person at the level of the ego adopts a variety of strategies to address them. Thus, the interplay between the id, the ego, and the superego determines the dynamics of human behavior. While the ego functions pretty much at the conscious level, the id is submerged in the subconscious and can be inferred essentially from its affects.

Now, in Gandhi's psychic architecture of the person we find a similar three-way tie-up. Gandhi repeatedly referred to the divide in us, between human/divine and the animal/brute, as we have seen. Between the two is the synthesis brought about individual effort. The three appear to have analogous functions as the id, the superego and the ego. However, there are significant differences between the

Freudian superego and Gandhi's human/divine and between the id and the animal/brute. The animal/brute does not consist entirely of sexual and aggressive instincts. It is more inclusive and involves all kinds of gratification. It is pleasure seeking in a broader sense. Further, in Freud the id in the form of libido is the only energy source of the psyche. In Gandhi, there is also the spiritual source of energy that can be cultivated and channeled for human development. In Freud, the ego and the superego are outgrowths of the id and the internalization of external influences. They are developmental in their formation. In Gandhi, the human/divine is a totally independent and basic element inherent in human nature itself. To be sure, it can be cultivated from within, but not borrowed from outside or simply internalized from parental and other influences. In addition to Freud's *pleasure principle* and *reality principle* we have in Gandhi the *spiritual principle* guiding us to truth and nonviolence.

In much of modern psychology, the ego constitutes the self. It gives the person her identity. Again, the ego-adjustment and self-regulation are fundamental for psychological well-being. In Gandhi and the Indian tradition in general, the ego is not the same as the *self*. The ego is the "surface self" one is familiar with; but it is not the real *self*, which is hidden. The surface self is a manifestation of the interplay of the id and the ego. As such, it is the "animal" self. It is pseudo self which masquerades as the real *self*. In Gandhi, the former is something to be reduced to "nothing." Thus, the ego may not be the instrument to resolve the conflicts. Rather it is itself a source of conflicts. What is needed is not mere adjustment of the ego, but its elimination by reducing it to a zero. In Gandhi, the true *self* is spiritual. It takes the place of Freudian superego. In Freud, the superego is a developed self that incorporates societal values and cultural norms and internalizes parental influences. In Gandhi, the spiritual *self* in the person is an essential human aspect of one's inherent nature in much the same way the id is an inherent animal aspect. As opposed to the self-centered and ego-driven surface self that gives separate identities, the spiritual *self* is altruist and binds people together with common values and extended identities. The goal of the person is one of transcending the pseudo, surface self, and realize the true *self* in one's being. Gandhi's assertion that there can be no nonviolence without violence refers to the constant "duel" between the animal and the human, the id and the superego, to which the person is subjected to.

Both Freud and Gandhi accept the dynamic nature of the psyche. There are basic impulses and urges that press for action. Freud's insights call our attention to a variety of ingenious ways people adopt to vent and release their instinctual urges and wishes. These include an array of defense mechanisms and transformations of different sorts brought about by the secondary process. The basic impulses are transformed into acceptable ways of discharging the energies unleashed. Gandhi goes far beyond Freud to add a spiritual dimension to possible transformations. Gandhi creatively explores the ways to contain conflicts more constructively by cultivating certain effective strategies beyond rationalization and adoption of defense mechanisms. In addition to rational transformation of the basic urges, there is in Gandhi room for spiritual transformation of the person. Further, according to

Gandhi, the psychic energy available to the person is not limited to a closed cortical system. There is a spiritual opening that extends beyond the person and brings about transformations in the outside world as well.

In a letter to Einstein, Freud (1933) says: "Conflicts of interest between man and man are resolved, in principle, by the recourse to violence. It is the same in the animal kingdom, from which man cannot claim exclusion." Gandhi does not disagree with such an observation. He, however, believes that in addition to the animal instinct in him, man's essential nature moves him toward nonviolent means of conflict resolution. Therefore, the spiritual in the person calls for the "exclusion" of violence and obtains it.

Of course there is much in psychoanalysis beyond Freud. Some of the successors of Freud may be seen as bringing Gandhi and psychoanalysis even closer. It is not possible to review here post-Freudian psychoanalysis in any detail. We will briefly refer to two well-known psychologists Carl Jung and Erich Fromm and then discuss the third, Erik Erikson, in some detail. Jung who began as a pupil of Freud left the main stream psychoanalytic movement to start his own analytical psychology. In Jung, we find the notion of the unconscious and the "primordial images" in the form of unconscious archetypes, which include among other things, God. With him, the unconscious is not just the dungheap of sexual and aggressive urges, but a consummate source of collectivity, creativity, and unity. As in Gandhi, we find in Jung (1963) constant "play of the opposites" and the striving of the self for identity and unity. Striving for unity and wholeness is seen as an archetypal drive and a source of transcendental experiences. This reminds us of Gandhi's altruism and the spiritual drive.

Fromm (1941, 1947) comes even closer to Gandhi in his attempts to understand human nature beyond the physiological drives and instincts to include man's desire for freedom and inclination to find truth and justice. Fromm differs from Freud's view that the notions of justice, truth, and freedom are no more than rationalizations of the physiological and animal urges and motives. Rather they represent, according to Fromm, genuine strivings and positive attributes of being human. They play a dynamic role in molding one's behavior. This is what Gandhi thought as the basic human aspect of the person.

Harvard psychologist Erikson (1963) emphasizes psycho-social development and the influence of sociocultural forces on the person more than instinctual impulses and drives. In his theoretical framework "ego identity" becomes a foundational concept. The notion of identity incorporates, on the one hand, how one sees oneself and, on the other hand, what others expect of him. In the present context, while discussing Gandhi, Erikson is more relevant than other psychoanalysts because he himself wrote on Gandhi and attempted to interpret Gandhi from a psychoanalytical perspective. Erikson studied in much detail the *satyāgraha* of textile mill workers in Ahmedabad under the leadership of Gandhi in order to understand the dynamics of *satyāgraha* and how it operates, the preconditions for offering it, its conduct and outcome. *Gandhi's Truth* is a must reading to anyone who wishes to understand how *satyāgraha* works in practice, even if we may not agree with all his conclusions.

Erikson admits that when he began writing his book, *Gandhi's Truth*, he himself "didnot expect to rediscover psychoanalysis in terms of truth, self suffering and nonviolence." At the end of the book, he concludes that he now senses "an affinity between Gandhi's truth and the insights of modern psychology" (1969, p. 440). How did Erikson "rediscover" psychoanalysis while writing on Gandhi? What are the insights of modern psychology that reinforce Gandhian thought? What follows is our reading of Erikson in an attempt to answer the above questions.

Erikson points out that *satyāgraha* involves a significant amount of preparation. It is not a simple technique that is readymade and pre-fabricated for use in any situation. As we noted earlier, the first requisite is "objective investigation of facts" involved in a conflict situation. This should be followed by "a sincere attempt at *arbitration.*" *Satyāgraha* should be the last resort offered only when all other peaceful methods have failed and the matter of conflict relates to something so fundamentally important that the one offering it should be prepared to commit himself to unlimited self-suffering. Equally important is that the *satyāgrahi* should have complete conviction that truth is on his side. Further, he should commit himself completely to a course of nonviolent action even under extreme provocations including threat to his life.

Satyāgraha is generally a group action. Therefore, it is for the group to decide on a course of action. An action committee and a leader are needed. They decide on the campaign and the strategies to be adopted. They select the form of *satyāgraha* to be offered such as strike, noncooperation, and civil disobedience. The *satyāgrahis* must rely on themselves and not depend on outsiders' support. The initiative of the *satyāgrahi* is to persuade and enlighten the opponent to the claims of truth. In attempting to persuade and enlighten the adversary, he should be equally prepared to be persuaded and englightened. Thus he should be both flexible and firm. Fasting is the extreme step. It should be the last resort. It cannot be used "for gaining a material selfish end, or to change the honestly held opinion of another or in support of an issue that is not clear, feasible and demonstrably just… To be legitimate, a fast should be capable of response" (Pyarelal 1967, quoted from Erikson 1969/1993, p. 417). Gandhi urged those against whom a *satyāgrahi* undertakes a fast "to refuse to yield to it, even though the refusal may result in the death of the fasting person" in the event that he considers the fasting no more than blackmail.

Finally, *satyāgraha* should go beyond conflict resolution. It should have a constructive outcome and a program to be followed up so that the possibility of similar conflicts arising in future is significantly reduced. It not only helps to make peace but also maintain peace afterward. Referring to the 1919 *satyāgraha* of the textile millworkers of Ahmedabad led by Gandhi, Erikson describes how "the gains obtained by *satyāgraha* were institutionalized in an industry-wide Board of Arbitrators." Erikson says that "it would be impossible to overrate the changes the post-strike days brought in regard to the concepts of work and collaboration" (p. 419).

We may see the similarities between the practice of *satyāgraha* and psychoanalysis from the above analysis of *satyāgraha*. Both psychoanalysis and *satyāgraha* are concerned with resolving conflicts, the former with intrapsychic and

the latter with group conflicts. The conflicts arise because of the play of the opposites operating in the person as well as in society. In the context of psychoanalysis, they are the id and the superego. In the case of *satyāgraha,* the conflict is between two conflicting claims of truth and the human *dharma* (morality). The aim of the *satyāgrahi* is similar to that of the psychoanalyst. The goal of both is to make the adversary/patient gain insight into the truth of the matter. In order to be successful, the *satyāgrahi* as well as the psychoanalyst need to study the facts concerning the person/problem thoroughly and fully before launching the course of action. They should move methodically from the simple and normal ways of communication to more complex and even what appear to be extraordinary ways. The goal is transformation through persuasion and not change by coercion, threat, or repression. Therefore, the methods used should be nonviolent. In the process, however, there is double conversion in that a successful outcome is often a learning experience to both parties, the psychoanalyst as well as his client/patient, the *satyāgrahi* and his opponent/adversary. Again, the *satyāgrahi* like the psychoanalyst should be trained and should have first-hand familiarity with the technique so that he appreciates fully the nuances involved. The *satyāgrahi* like the psychoanalyst should nurture empathy and love and not entertain any resentment or negative feelings toward the other. Finally, the entire exercise should involve not only temporary resolution of the conflict, but also a constructive insight that would prevent or minimize the occurrence in future of similar conflicts.

The above similarities, between psychoanalysis and Gandhi are based on the following assumptions. First, intra-human conflicts with which *satyāgraha* is concerned (conflicts between individuals and groups with different identities) are analogous to intrapsychic conflicts with which psychoanalysis deals. The intrapsychic and interpersonal conflicts are resolved by gaining truthful insight into the troubling situation; and *satyāgraha* and psychoanalysis can help to gain such insight into truth. Both the procedures, *satyāgraha* as well as psychoanalysis, should adhere scrupulously to the principle of nonviolence in practices because if for no other reason, no one involved in the situation should be hurt. It is nonviolence practised as self-suffering and love for the other that stands as the true test for truth to prevail.

According to Erikson, behind the intrapsychic conflicts the issues of personal identity are involved. Similarly, the intra-human conflicts are occasioned by the seeming conflicts between pseudospecies identities he calls "pseudospeciation." One may not force the other to give up his identity. Such a threat would only aggravate the situation. The most persuasive way of ensuring change is to point to common identity. Appeal to inclusive identity is possible only through nonviolent persuasion. Pseudospeciation refers to the tendency to divide humans into various categories and give them different identities when in fact all humans make up for one single species. Erikson calls our attention to "a way by which pseudo-species mentality of warring groups can be disarmed, as it were, within a wider identity… Gandhi showed himself on intimate terms with the actualities of his era. For in all parts of the world, the struggle now is for the *anticipatory development of more inclusive identities*" (original emphasis). Erikson goes on to add, "I submit, then,

Gandhi in his immense intuition for historical actuality and his capacity to assume leadership in 'truth in action,' may have created a ritualization through which men, equipped with both realism and spiritual strength, can face each other with a 'mutual confidence analogous to the instinctive safety built into the animals' pacific rituals" (1969, p. 433). *Satyāgraha* offering should be "pervaded with a spirit of *giving the opponent the courage to change* even as the challengers remained ready to change with the events. At such periods of his life Gandhi possessed a Franciscan gaiety and a capacity to reduce situations to their bare essentials, thus helping others both to discard costly defenses and denials and to realize hidden potentials of good will and energetic deed" (original emphasis, p. 435).

Satyāgraha, according to Erikson, involves "therapeutic persuasion as a cure of man's aberrations" and that therapeutic persuasion involved in *satyāgraha* is "a counterpoint to political terror." He adds further that "violence against the adversary and against self are inseparable" (1969, p. 437) and implies that nonviolence practised by *satyāgrahi* will provoke the adversary to the message of nonviolence, leading to "double conversion: the hateful person, by containing his egoistic hate and by learning to love the opponent as human, will confront the opponent with an enveloping technique that will force, or rather permit, him to regain his latent capacity to trust and to love" (1969, p. 437).

Satyāgraha in Erikson's characterization is a sacred ritual not unlike the more secular ritual of psychoanalysis. Now that the technological advances have completely undermined the adaptive value that wars may have had in the past, it is time to replace the "uniformed ritual" of war by such nonviolent rituals as *satyāgraha*. Erikson adds that "social identity and the hatred of 'otherness,' morality and righteous violence, inventiveness and mass destruction" have evolved together. Therefore, they "must be studied together."

Erikson refers to Gandhi's answer just a few hours before the latter's death to a question "how he would meet the atom bomb…. with nonviolence?" Gandhi replied, "I will not go underground, I will not go into shelter. I will come out in the open and let the pilot see I have not a trace of evil against him. The pilot will not see our faces from his great height, I know. But that longing in our hearts—that he will not come to harm—would reach up to him and his eyes would be opened." Erikson grants the foolishness and absurdity involved, but pins his faith in new developments and technologies to deal with the issues. He does not, however, refer to developments that already exist to render Gandhi's remedy not so hopelessly foolish and absurd. Gandhi's faith is contained in the spiritual component of *satyāgraha*. He believed in the possibility of spiritually converting the opponent. Such spiritual communication and conversion is not limited by such constraints as distance, visibility, and so on. The seeds of such a possibility are already available in parapsychological research and epidemiological studies of religiosity. The effects of intercessory prayer on health and healing referred to earlier in the book are especially noteworthy.

10.8 Gandhi's Transformation

One of the applied aspects of Indian psychology as mentioned is the transformation of the person to achieve excellence. The life of Gandhi is an exemplary case of how one can transform himself from ordinary to extraordinary states of being. Gandhi was not a born leader, much less a saint, and Mahātmā that he later came to be. He was just an ordinary man with all the failings and frailties that afflict many of us. He tells us in his autobiography: "It took me long to get free from the shackles of lust, and I had to pass many ordeals before I could remove it" (1927/2007, p. 26). It was a constant effort at self-discipline and practice of detachment, *abhyāsa* and *vairagya* that led him progressively to be revered as a super human figure.

Girishwar Misra and Shivantika Sharad (Misra and Sharad 2013; Sharad and Misra 2013) in a pioneering attempt to illustrate the principles of Indian psychology, studied the biographies of outstanding persons like Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo. They describe how Gandhi, "the extraordinary ordinary man" transformed himself from Mohandas to Mahātmā, and how his life validates the notion of an authentic self and charts a path of personal transformation. In the process, they draw lessons as to how an authentic self helps to negotiate "conflicts and paradoxes of freedom and responsibility, of individual and collective, of liberation and cultural limitations." In Indian psychological tradition, "the search of true or authentic self (*ātmānam viddhi)* is held to be the prime goal of human life." In other words, self-realization involves finding one's authentic self and acting in ways consistent with it. However, the authentic self described in the Upaniṣadic tradition refers to something much deeper than its Western usage. It is *Ātma-vidyā*, which involves more than being autonomous in one's moral judgments.

Misra and Sharad (2013) identify six distinctive perspectives on authenticity of the self in the Western literature. They include (1) correspondence between the inner and the outer (Goldman and Kernis 2002), (2) congruence between (a) experience, (b) its awareness, and (c) communication of it (Rogers 1969), (3) nonconformance with culturally dominant views and assertion of one's own views (Rousseau 1979), (4) freedom and choice in thought and action (Sartre 1943/1966), (5) integration and coherence of the different aspects of the self (Sayers 1999), and (6) wilful striving for awareness of values and maintaining consistency of inward belief and outward action (Burks and Robbins 2011).

From the Indian perspective, authentic life involves transformation of "the empirical self into the true self of pure consciousness." This is what is actually implied in the notion of self-realization. In the Indian tradition, the sine qua non of self-realization is integration of thought and action, congruence of knowing and being. So authenticity in the Indian tradition is indicated by the coherence of values and their application in real life. As a process, authenticity involves bringing coherence, correspondence, consistency, unity, and coordination between the different manifestations of the self. The difference between Indian and Western perspectives is not so much in the process as in the actual content, i.e., what it is to be authentic. This would seem to be an outcome of contrasting conceptions of human

nature, differing epistemology of values, and the constraints of tradition. For Gandhi, values emanate from the true *self*. The true *self* is divine and spiritual, the realization of which leads to right values, which include freedom, love for the other, altruism, nonviolence, and adherence to truth. The manifest hedonic hunger, pleasure-seeking behavior, and the thirst for power and dominance are characteristics of the ego-bound pseudo self. The true *self* on the contrary is characterized by love and altruism. It represents the spiritual side of the person.

What are the factors that shaped Gandhi's life and his transformation? From the account provided by Misra and Sharad (2013) we may cull the following and add our own interpretation to them: (1) courage, (2) confession, (3) faith and commitment, (4) compassion, (5) openness to new experience, (6) shifting focus from the outer to the inner demands/perceptions, (7) readiness to learn from experience, (8) adherence to superordinate ideal/s like *sarvodaya,* (9) extending the self beyond oneself, (10) detachment, and (11) *satyāgraha,* in the sense of upholding truth. Without the extraordinary courage stemming from moral conviction, the kind of courage that he displayed, Gandhi would not have achieved what he did. He was never tired of saying how important courage is even in nonviolent struggles, which give the false appearance of calling for less courage than violent ones. In fact, Gandhi emphasized repeatedly that practice of nonviolence requires more courage than engaging in violence and expressing aggression. It takes more courage to endure suffering than inflicting it on others.

Gandhi observed that confession is an act of acceptance that one is wrong when he knows that he is wrong. Confession makes it easy to change and modify one's behavior rather than hide behind false pretexts and rationalizations. Again, confession calls for courage; and cowards find it difficult to confess. Commitment to and faith in what one is doing is a necessary characteristic of one undergoing transformation. It provides the energy one needs to stay on course. A lot of such energy is needed to weather the numerous vicissitudes one encounters in search for truth. Gandhi observed on several occasions how his unfailing faith in God sustained him. Compassion and love for the other is a necessary ingredient in the transformational process. Without compassion and love, conviction/faith and courage may make one a fanatic and blind him to the real truth. Love makes one open to new experience that may indeed aid in transformation. Openness to new experience, readiness to learn from such experience, and the ability to shift attention from the outward to the inward in assessing and asserting truth are all interrelated and necessary for transformation.

Turning inward has a special significance and meaning in Gandhi's case. Gandhi referred to "inner voice" whose guidance he unfailingly took and, according to him, benefitted by it. At critical moments of decision making he listened to and acted according to the dictates of the inner voice, even when it appeared to be not logical and rational. Yet, in the final outcome it proved to be correct. Gandhi, however, is not alone in this. In fact, as Alschuler (1993) says, "hearing an inner voice is not a particularly rare event." Gandhi would have no problem agreeing with this.

Gandhi is in the illustrious company of such people as Saint Teresa and Socrates, who also learned to listen to their inner voice. As Myers (1903) states, Socrates since his childhood heard the voice of some "semi-divine being." Socrates called this inner voice "the sign." It is this sign that warned him not to defend himself at his trial for impiety. Then we may also note that Adolf Hitler reported that he heard the inner voice frequently and that he acted in accordance with its dictates. Among other incidents is the one where, while Hitler was hiding in a trench, the inner voice told him "get up and go over there," which he readily did. Moments later, the part of the trench, where he was, was hit by a shell that killed every one there. It would seem, then, that the inner voice is available not only to saints and Mahātmās, but also to others, including people like Hitler. Analyzing a number of cases, Alschuler points out that inner voice appears to provide (1) superior information and (2) superior inspiration.

Strict adherence to a superordinate ideal that sets the goals to be pursued is a necessary condition for transformation. In Gandhi's case the superordinate ideal is *sarvodaya. Sarvodaya* is wishing well for all. It is not simply the greatest good to greatest numbers but equal good for all. *Sarvodaya* is the spirit behind altruism. The goal of *sarvodaya* is such that one is actuated by *self-restraint* and not by *self-interest*. It actualizes the inherent love for others. It emphasizes nonpossession and does not encourage acquisition beyond one's bare necessities and exploitation of others. It is the bridge to enter the spiritual and transpersonal realm. It helps to break down the ego-boundaries and expand one's identity beyond the narrow self.

Like Truth and God, *sarvodaya* is an ideal and goal to be aimed at and not something one readily encounters or realizes in his life. However, like truth it can be contextualized in its pragmatic applications. Gandhi's *swaraj, swadeshi,* and *swadharma*, which we discussed earlier, are such contextualizations of *sarvodaya* that Gandhi had sought to practice.

An important collateral factor that we find in the process of transformation is extending the self beyond oneself. This what Misra and Sharad refer to as "living life in shared spaces." This again, as we mentioned, is a consequence of adhering to the ideal of *sarvodaya*. Such adherence calls for cultivating the sense of detachment. Detachment helps to break ego-boundaries and to deconstruct the ego.

The final and clearly the most important of all the transformational factors is strict adherence to truth. The term Gandhi coined for it is *satyāgraha*. By *satyāgraha*, we generally understand the technique Gandhi designed and practised as a nonviolent social action for conflict resolution. In truth, it is more than that. It is commitment to adhere and uphold truth. *Satyāgrahic* action is one meant to search for and uphold truth. Thus *satyāgraha* is both a technique for nonviolent conflict resolution, but also a perennial personal value, a mindset one must cherish and practice in life. Here again, we find in Gandhi pragmatic idealism/spiritualism that contextualizes and concretises truth. It is not absolute and unbending. Compromise is a part of it. Gandhi says, "all my life through, the very insistence of truth has taught me to appreciate the beauty of compromise… this spirit was an essential part of *satyāgraha*" (1927/2007, p. 123). Misra and Sharad point out "compromise is extremely relevant for living life in shared-relational spaces."

In observing strict adherence to truth, Gandhi finds it mandatory to practice nonviolence. Therefore, nonviolence becomes the twin principle of Truth. If Truth is the goal, nonviolence is the means. We have discussed Truth and Nonviolence previously at some length as the twin principles in Gandhi's thought and practice. In the present context, we may simply note how the different factors we noted as involved in the transformational process are so closely linked that one seems to flow from the other. Pursuit of truth calls for nonviolence. Nonviolence implies suffering oneself instead of inflicting on others. Voluntary self-suffering requires that the ego is deconstructed and one's identity is extended so as to relate oneself to the others. Again, this calls for detachment and commitment to "higher purpose and moral principles over societal norms and authority structures." Self-suffering can be endured only when one has faith in his pursuit and commitment to the cause he is fighting for. All these presuppose abiding love for others and the belief in the unity of life.

10.9 Gandhi: An Organizational Guru

As we noted, M.K. Gandhi was not an exceptional individual by birth. He transformed himself with effort, diligence, and commitment to become one. The metamorphosis of Mohandas into *Mahātmā* is not sudden and mysterious. It was a cultivated change. He tells us in his autobiography how he lied to his parents and committed some disgraceful acts as many do. But what marks him apart is that he did not try to cover them up. He had the courage to confess, which gave him the motivation to resolve and not to hide them. This led him not to succumb to such temptations in future, and the strength to stand by that resolve. This was the beginning of a lifelong pursuit in search of truth and personal transformation. We discussed in the previous section some aspects of such transformation. Another significant and related aspect is how Gandhi, a shy, timid and somewhat withdrawn young man, became such a public figure and mass leader who helped to bring political emancipation to hundreds of millions of fellow Indians and provide inspiration for many more outside India. What are the psychological lessons we as psychologists may learn from his life in matters relating to leadership and organizational behavior?

In a recent book, *Gandhi, CEO,* Axelrod (2010) traces the leadership strategies employed by Gandhi and their relevance to current competition-driven global business and management. He organizes these strategies into 14 facets and draws 100 lessons to learn from them. We may not share Axelrod's corporate slant and some facile generalizations in a book primarily addressed to general public. However, we freely draw from his insights and add our interpretation. In doing so, we use our own dimensions and characterization.

The Goal: Whatever is the field of activity, Gandhi's goal is to realize truth. In this endeavor, the task of the leader is twofold: (a) adherence and commitment to Truth and (b) contextualizing truth in a given situation. These are contained in

lessons 98, 99, and 100 of Axelrod. In his words, they are (98). "Ask the Question of Truth," (99) "Demand Truth," and (100) "Truth Always Triumphs." In Gandhi, as we have noted, "truth" has various connotations. There is, however, one fundamental distinction he makes between Truth in its absolute sense and truth as manifests or conceived in a given situation. The former is presumed to be one and unchanging. However, it is not objectively given but subjectively/intuitively felt. The latter is admittedly not uniform, but relevant to a given context. This is something that can be discovered and rendered objective. Here lies the genius and the creative contribution of the leaders. *In contextualizing truth, the leader actualizes it.*

Intuition has a place in Gandhi's epistemology. Among other things, as we noted, Gandhi listened to and guided by his "inner voice." It is the inner voice that gave him access to intuitive truth. In order that the inner voice be a genuine/truthful communication, Gandhi has repeatedly asserted, one's mind should be focussed on truth and be free from biases, prejudices and preconceptions. In other words, it should be dispassionate and fully detached. Thus detachment, i.e., free from prejudice and bias, is a precondition for one to be a good leader. Detachment is not renunciation of action; it is renunciation of the ego and selfishness. It is not *saṅnyāsa*, but *niṣkāma karma* as in *karma yoga.*

Discussing organizational psychology in the native Indian tradition, Bhawuk (2008) presents an indigenous topology of leaders. His classification identifies four distinctive types of leaders: (i) *saṅnyāsi* leaders, (ii) *karma yogi* leaders, (iii) *pragmatic* leaders, and (iv) *legitimate* nonleaders. The first category includes such people as Swami Vivekananda and Sivananda. Obviously, *saṅnyāsi* leaders are the religious leaders, leading people in their spiritual lives. However, Bhawuk seems to extend this leadership style to secular domain as well. For example, he includes Swami Agnivesh in this category, and credits him with initiating some social reforms. Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru are included in the category of *karma yogi* leaders who rendered selfless service following the *Bhagavag Gītā* ideal of *niṣkāma karma.* The third group of pragmatic leadership is represented by people like Indira Gandhi, Ratan Tata, and Dhirubhai Ambani. They are successful leaders in politics and business who are neither *saṅnyāsi*s nor *karmayogi*s. The legitimate nonleaders are leaders by accident. They are those who are thrust into leadership roles by some accident such as birth or some other extraneous reason and occupy a position of authority in an organization even when they show no special talent or aptitude for leadership. Even though Bhawuk does not mention, India appears to be a special place for leaders of this type, where "dynastic" politics is widely practised and where family business is not uncommon. While the above typology is not without merit, it would seem that the only type of genuine indigenous leadership is the *karma yogi* type, which is very distinctive and contrasts well with Western leadership categories. Other cultures also have *saṅnyāsi* leaders, which include many religious crusaders, and of course they are full of pragmatic leaders in politics as well as in business corporations.

Mahatma Gandhi was a *karma yogi* in its best sense. He substituted sacrifice to selfishness. He added ethical dimension to business and governance. He lifted the self to the level of supreme and sought to dim the separation between his "self" and the others. In attempting to bridge polarities and unify humanity, Gandhi truly showed a kind of leadership that is rare and yet much needed to lead the world during these troubled times. His concept of trusteeship is amazingly appropriate in the current emphasis on the social responsibility of corporations and business (see Rao 2014b).

The Means: If truth is the goal, for Gandhi as we discussed, nonviolence is the means. Truth and nonviolence are overarching and interlinked principles on which there is no room for compromise whatsoever. However, Truth and Nonviolence as absolute and uncompromising values are ideals. To realize truth in one's life and to practice nonviolence in one's thoughts and actions, i.e., in order to actualize them, one needs to contextualize them. Such contextualization is the primary task of the leader. The leader does not merely preach nonviolence, he practices it. In so doing, a successful leader actualizes it. In contextualizing nonviolence, Gandhi actualized creatively a series of strategies for nonviolent action and leadership. Gandhi spent his lifetime experimenting with a variety of techniques to actualize nonviolence as an effective mode of conflict resolution. It has ranged all the way from promoting dissent and noncooperation to practicing *satyāgraha* and even going on fast unto death. A leader should know when and how to start noncooperation. He should also know how to compromise, and when and how to end the struggle. The leader should be firm in his convictions and yet ready for compromise and even to modify his stand because of inherent inability to know what ultimately is right and correct in a given situation.

Now, Gandhi's role as a leader, as the world knows, is in the context of resolving conflicts. His nonviolent methods such as noncooperation and *satyāgraha* are the tools he had adopted to resolve conflicts. Further, his campaign is often against those in authority. In the case of leaders who are heading an organization, there is a kind of role reversal. The leader himself is the authority. In such situations do Gandhi's strategies of nonviolence work? The answer to this question would be twofold. First, while Gandhi clearly waged his campaigns against those in authority and fought on behalf of the workers and against the organization, he in his own leadership role had to build his own movement and draw the best out of his coworkers in the cause of the campaign; and this is no different from the role of the CEO who motivates, unites, and inspires his staff to do the best to promote the cause of the corporation. Second, admittedly the dynamics of interaction in conflict resolving situation and team building effort are different. This may call for different emphasis; but the activity runs very much in similar ways.

The leader promoting noncooperation and the CEO promoting cooperation are working in similar ways. They could adopt analogous nonviolent strategies. Just as the *satyāgraha* leader does not coerce or compel his co-workers to join the movement to noncooperate, the corporate CEO may not adopt coercive methods to demand cooperation but persuade them to do so in their own best interests which are tied to the interests of the organization. Cooperation in Gandhi's thinking is the

key to success. Noncooperation is a necessity to break a bad system, by making it dysfunctional. Therefore, the success of a corporate leader depends on the level and quality of cooperation he can generate among the workers, just as the success of the one leading a struggle depends on the noncooperation with the authority generated by the cooperation within and among the members of the group waging the campaign struggle.

From the twin principles of Truth and Nonviolence in relation to leadership, we may conclude that the leader's primary role is to make the ideal real. The ideal is the goal. The real is what is factual. The beauty of Gandhian thought is that many of the usual dichotomies lose their punch. Individual and society, ideal and real, theory and practice, secular and spiritual, and so on are not distinct and sharp dividing categories. They constitute one and the same continuum. Take for example, the real-ideal dichotomy or its philosophical counterpart pragmatism and idealism. In Gandhi, we find pragmatic idealism. It consists in transforming the ideal into the real in one's life. Similarly, is the case with the divide between the individual and group. The interest of the individual and the welfare of the group are mutually related and indeed tied. In the final analysis, what is good and right for the individual is what is good for the community. Similarly, what is good for an employee of an organization is something that is equally good for the organization as well.

The ninth of the 14 facets in Axelrod's analysis of Gandhi's leadership strategies is titled "Principles and Pragmatism." It roughly corresponds to what we described as "ideal and real." There is, however, an important and in some ways crucial distinction between the two. In the former case, Axelrod speaks of how Gandhi successfully practised "the art of *balancing* principles and pragmatism to produce meaningful and productive change" (2010, p. 122 emphasis added). In our interpretation, there is no dichotomy between principles and their pragmatic application because they are not different and distinctive. Therefore, there is no need to balance them. Pragmatic action is what makes the ideal real in a given situation. Pragmatic application of a principle is no other than concretizing the principle, i.e., actualizing the principle and making it real in a given context.

What is it like to be a nonviolent CEO? The question does not appear relevant. At the outset, it may be kept in mind that we are not concerned how the CEO governs his organization by nonviolence because the CEO is not the governor. The relationship between him, the organization and its employees is not one of the governor and the governed, not of master or servant. Rather the CEO and the other employees of the organization are all employees, partners, and stake holders. The others involved are an extension of the leader himself/herself. Therefore, what binds them all together are not coercive rules or punitive procedures, but mutual love and good will. Gandhi spoke of love and soul-force. It is what should drive the organization and not the fear of punishment, not even the lure of rewards. The binding and driving force is truthful understanding of the goals and shared values, and voluntary and whole-hearted compliance with them. This calls for the communication and shared perception of common good. One needs violence and punitive action to maintain untruth and justify improper actions. No violence is needed to ensure that truth prevails and that right action is taken. What fosters truth is love and

not coercive persuasion. Therefore, the nonviolent CEO is the one who radiates love, spreads compassion, and helps to "create a climate of compliance" by truthful persuasion and the strength of shared values. In order to accomplish this, the nonviolent CEO is one who is able to transcend the ego and selfish indulgences and reach out to others with love and altruism because he sees the others in himself. This is proportional to what Gandhi meant by reducing oneself to a zero. The leader takes the suffering of others as his own. His love for others makes him to endure suffering himself and not inflict it on others. His suffering generates empathy, propogates love, and creates a situation conducive for optimum realization of the shared goals and interests of the leader, organization, and the employees, nay all the stakeholders.

The CEO is thus neither the master nor the servant of the organization. He like the others involved finds common identity in the very spirit of the organization. However, he is the leader. In being a leader, he inspires, challenges, and motivates all those around him and beyond. His task is one of humanizing the organization. Recall what we said by humanization in the Gandhian sense; it is bringing forth, out into the open, the hidden divine that is often suppressed by the animal instincts in us.

Central to Gandhi's leadership model is persuasion. Persuasion involves communication of truth and not coercion to comply. Gandhi was a consummate communicator from the very beginning. He created for himself the tools for communication. Recall how he had started in 1903 the journal *Indian Opinion* in South Africa. Gandhi was an incessant writer of felicitous letters, which fill dozens of volumes. Again recall his campaigns, for example, the Ahmedabad *satyāgraha* of the textile workers he led. During the strike, a leaflet was issued everyday detailing the movement. And then there were those meetings. In the morning Gandhi addressed the prayer meeting at the Ashram. Every evening Gandhi gathered around the workers under the big babul tree on the banks of the Sabarmati river and spoke to large gatherings. Thus as a leader he continuously kept in close touch with his co-workers. Gandhi inspired change while ensuring stability. He was clear in the perception of his objectives and goals; and he was able to communicate them with such simplicity and straightforwardness no one can miss their import. This is indeed what created the common identity which is so essential for a sustained and successful campaign. Simplicity is mark of Gandhi's leadership. His language was simple like his attire so that he could relate to people whom he was representing. Gandhi measured his success more in terms of the effort shown than the results achieved.

When we talk of leadership, we often speak about leadership style such as democratic versus autocratic type. Was Gandhi a democratic leader, or was he an autocrat? We believe the democratic versus autocratic is a categorization in the Western tradition. It is not really helpful to understand the Gandhian model of leadership. Gandhi has not always followed the majority opinion. Rather he attempted to mold the public opinion consistent with what he considered to be truth. He did not subscribe to the view that the majority view is always right. However, he always wanted the majority to subscribe to truth he sought. A true leader is one who wins the majority to endorse the truth and not one who sheepishly follows the majority opinion.

Now, one may legitimately wonder whether the "rough-and-tumble realities of the boardroom and marketplace" and "the down-and-dirty world of politics and business, of deal-making and power playing" admit the kind of altruism that characterizes Gandhian type of leadership. Gandhi earnestly believed that it is possible; and his life is a measure of its practicality and success. Though modest by all means, it is a testimony for its usefulness. Its relevance is increasingly felt as a necessity to reduce the pace with which humanity is fast moving toward self-destruction.

Again, the response to the above concern and reasonable reservation about the applicability of Gandhi's ideas is implicit in the Gandhian model of leadership and the nature of business itself. The so-called the "down-and-dirty world" of politics and business is so because of the manifest divorce of values and goals of business and politics as practised. Gandhi endeavored all his life to emphasize and point to the inalienable connection between morality and business, ethics and politics. He strived relentlessly to spiritualize politics; it is no more or no less than adding to them the value dimension and ethical perspective. The "rough-and-tumble of realities of the boardroom" is a consequence of the conflict between business values and genuinely shared general values. When business values profits more than morals, then we have the problem. Gandhi showed how moral values should be central to business values. As Axelrod admits: "The world's economic experience in the first decade of the twenty-first century had demonstrated that, far from being optional in business, let alone incompatible with profit, sound ethics are integral with the processes of commerce and are essential to sustained profitability" (2010, p. xiv). If this is indeed so, how can the Gandhian model be irrelevant in the twenty-first century!

To conclude, Gandhi's model of leadership is in a word "spiritual." What we mean by spiritual is often clouded by one's preconceptions. In the West, it is a much abused and misunderstood word. It is closely associated with chicanry in séance rooms and fraudulent practices of mediums. In Indian thought and Gandhi in particular spiritual stands for altruism, *sarvodaya* (literally the rise of all). It is transcending the self and negating the ego. It is experiencing one's identity within universal identity. Spiritual is a state of being. Spirituality is an aspect intrinsic to human condition but often clouded by mundane appetites. Spiritual realization actualizes 'I' and the 'other' as reflexive of each other.

Spiritual goes beyond reason and rationality. It is not, however, an irrational but a transrational state. It is extraordinary and significantly different from the ordinary and the mundane. It gives one higher threshold for tolerating ambiguities. It endows one with a special facility to reconcile paradoxes and assimilate opposing points of view. In an important sense, it is a state in which contraries coexist without creating conflict and dissonance. Such an attitude is indeed the bedrock of pluralism. Pluralism as a way of life is dependent for its very survival on such a spiritual state. Gandhi was all too familiar with and quite appreciative of the *anekāntavāda* of the Jains and the multifacetedness of truth advocated by it, as we noted. Again, we find a fine blend of absolutism and contextualism in Gandhi, which again would be possible only in a spiritual state of being.

As mentioned, spirituality for Gandhi is not seclusion, not a state of recluse. Rather it is engagement in intensive activity which is not egotist but altruist. In fact, Gandhi saw little difference between spirituality and service. In a sense, Gandhi applied spirituality to work and action. In other words, he actualized spirituality in selfless action and altruistic work. Gandhi asserted, "I have not yet understood that there is anything like spiritual or moral value apart from work and action" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 40, p. 14). Again, "My spiritual seeking, whether or not original, has always been in the form of social service" (CWMG 2001, Vol. 55, p. 147). What is original here is that Gandhi attempted to contextualize and actualize spirituality in life and action instead of merely speculating about it. It is indeed the Gandhian method of making the ideal real in a dialectical process, bridging the gap between the transcendental and the empirical. This is what he did, as we noted earlier, in dealing with truth and nonviolence.

Kakar on Gandhi's Spiritual Leadership: Kakar (2013), renowned author, psychoanalyst and incidentally a student of Erik Erikson at Harvard, wrote about Gandhi's practical spirituality as "more relevant to the leading of our lives, personal and institutional, than the spiritual seeking of contemplative saints meditating on the divine in their monasteries, hermitages or caves." This is very reassuring because Kakar is a man of impeccable secular credentials and not known for any religious zeal. Kakar has analyzed "the essential elements of a spiritually informed leadership" as exemplified in the life and experiments of M.K. Gandhi. Kakar identifies six such elements—(1) empathy, (2) detachment from fruits of action, (3) deep introspection (4) listening to the inner voice, arising from the unconscious, (5) acceptance of complete responsibility and (6) carrying the decision through with fearlessness and humor.

Empathy is "fellow-feeling." It is "brotherhood," and in Gandhi's view "a test of true spirituality." Kakar says that "Gandhi's emphasis on altruistic action has at its base the development of empathy as the supreme virtue" as exemplified in Gandhi's ideal person, "he who sees all beings in his own self and his own self in all beings." The spiritual dimension of altruism consists in love and compassion, like deep nonviolence which Gandhi described as an "ocean of compassion."

The second element of spiritual leadership is detachment from fruits of action. According to Kakar, it consists in overcoming "the insidious egotism" and in renouncing "the *fruits* of action" and not action itself. "In more psychological language," writes Kakar, "Gandhi is suggesting that a passionate but non-egotistic involvement in one's work is the path to development of empathy and spiritualization of life." Detachment is "the subjugation of Narcissus" which comes from what Gandhi: called "heart-churn" and "heart-culture" which is behind "uncompromising ethical living."

The "heart-churn," Kakar says, involves "deep introspection," the third element of spiritually informed leadership. Deep introspection requires courage because fearlessness is a prerequisite of moral action. It calls for "commitment and conviction" to live in truth. In Gandhi's case it was the "inner voice" the dictates of which were revealed in his deep introspection. Hearing of inner voice is a sign of being in a state of spiritual grace." Though often "sudden and unexpected," it is

something to be cultivated. Gandhi fasted and spent time in silent prayer, Kakar points out, because it was "in the stillness of silence that his inner voice was at its most insistent." The kind of exercise involved requires that one take full responsibility for his actions and carry out the decisions he comes to with fearlessness and good humor.

Kakar characterizes Gandhi "as a pioneer of a new spirituality." His "practical spirituality is a mode of being spiritually engaged with the world which may be uniquely suited to address the challenges of our times and the worlds still to come. With Gandhi as the model, we can say that in a state of spiritual grace the practical spiritual man combines sublime fearlessness with robust humor. He is filled with a serenity that comes from an unconcern with the consequences once the decision to act has been taken and painful choices faced. Above all, though, he is infused with a wide ranging empathy that even extends to his opponents." (All quotes are from Kakar 2013).

10.10 Summary

According to Gandhi, human beings with their animal origin are instinct-driven and pleasure seeking. At the same time, hidden in them is a streak of spirituality that can be cultivated to transform their lives. Consequently, humans participate in two universes available to them. One is the mundane—the so-called matter of fact discourse, where third-person observation, reason, and logic rule as valid arbitrators providing justificatory criteria. This is the universe of discourse where reasonable men can reach a consensus. This we would like to call the material state of being distinguished from the spiritual state we have spoken of. The former seems to work very well in most cases of matter of fact knowledge. However, there is another universe where there is no availability of such observations that lead to consensual, factual observations. This is the realm of non-mundane. Moral discourse is one of those that squarely falls in this universe. Here it is not observation, but intuition that is the guide. It is not the logical argument, but personal realization that generates conviction. The so-called intrinsic values have their origin in such a spiritual state, where truth is self-certifying, permitting absolute indubitability and authentic personal conviction.

Matter of fact observations in the mundane discourse as well as the authentic subjective experiences in the spiritual realm point to two distinctive epistemological sources. The two are not tightly sealed in separate compartments. Humans in their dialogues and discussions easily shift from the mundane to the spiritual discourse and vice versa. In the matter of morals, for example, we speak of instrumental and intrinsic values and find different justifications for them. Gandhi spoke of "inner voice" guiding him; and yet he was committed to experimentation and verification of the veracity of his intuitively obtained ideas in practice. It is because he believed in the congruence of the two realms and their merging together for consummate happiness of humankind. In fact, it is the true core of Gandhian thought which

presupposes reflexive relationship between such dichotomics as 'I' and the 'other,' individual and society, subject and object, reason and experience realized in a spiritual state. The pragmatic genius of Gandhi made it possible to bridge the two realms of mundane and the spiritual. The spiritual is the ideal; and the truth in the mundane is actualization of the spiritual in real life. We find in Gandhi a kind of successful science-spirituality symbiosis. *Satyāgraha* is a supreme example of this.

Gandhi's philosophy as well as the practices are an outcome of a dialectical process. They are born of a principled attempt to reconcile and find synthesis of two conflicting, opposing aspects in one's nature. This dialectic is the hallmark of Gandhian method of inquiry. In its most general form, Gandhian dialectic starts with the opposition between the *actual*, what actually obtains at a given time, and the *ideal*, the goal of one's endeavor. The synthesis is what one can achieve in the process, viz., what is practically realized in life. Here we find that the *actual* and the *ideal* merge to give one what is *practical*. Thus, Gandhian dialectic has the ideal and actual in conflict. His method is to find a synthesis that can be practically applied. Life exhibits a series of polarities and we are constantly engaged in the process of their resolution. Gandhi's dialectic is so comprehensive and elaborate it touches every aspect of human experience and all the areas of human quest, from ethics to economics and from science to spirituality.

Gandhian thought is quite consistent with the main stream classical Indian thought as we find in the relationship between *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* in Vedānta and the reflexivity between supreme consciousness and manifest consciousness in human condition in Yoga and Advaita psychology. For example in Yoga, there is a reflexive relationship between consciousness as-such (*puruṣa*) and the mind. From the epistemological perspective, as we interpret Gandhi, knowledge processed by the mind via its sensory channels gives us phenomenal awareness and is subject to all limitations that constrain the mind in reflecting and realizing consciousness. Phenomenal awareness results from contextualization of transcendental awareness. It is concretizing consciousness as-such by cognitive processing, i.e., actualizing consciousness as-such.

Mental phenomena that give us phenomenal awareness are intentional in that they are about objects. When a person has phenomenal awareness, she experiences subject–object duality. In transcendental states, such a duality mediated by the mind does not exist. As Dasgupta (1924) puts it: "The thing in this state does not appear to be an object of my consciousness, but my consciousness becoming divested of all 'I' or 'mine' becomes one with the object itself; so that there is no notion here as 'I know this', but the mind becomes one with the thing, so that the notion of subject drops off and the result is the one steady transformation of the mind into the objective of its contemplation" (p. 151). This is possible because there is a reflexive relation between consciousness as-such (*puruṣa*) and the *buddhi*, the psychic component of the mind. This indeed is the reversal of the normal cognitive process. It is moving from the concrete to the abstract, from the phenomenal to transcendental.

Nonviolence, as an intrinsic value and as an instrumental value, bears the same relationship as the one between *puruṣa* and the mind. Phenomenal consciousness is like nonviolence in the mundane matter of fact world and consciousness as-such is nonviolence per se as an intrinsic value. The same may be said of truth—Truth as an ideal and truth as factual. Gandhi's life was a series of experiments to contextualize Truth and Nonviolence. In his pragmatic idealism, we find the way of finding truth in practice and applying nonviolence in action. Gandhi was a yogin. His yoga is Yoga of Nonviolence. Attachment does violence to the altruistic self. Therefore, yoga of nonviolence is *Anāsakti Yoga,* the title Gandhi gave to his Gujarati translation of the *Gītā.*

Glossary of Sanskrit and Pāli Terms

Abhiniveśa Clinging to life, will-to-live, an urge for survival, or for self-preservation.

Abhyāsa Practice.

Ahaṁkāra The ego or self-referencing function of the mind, feelings, and thoughts about self at empirical level. Egoism or self-conceit; the self-arrogating principle "I" that is projected by the mind rather than the real *self*. Awareness of oneself, or of individuality.

Ahiṁsā Nonviolence.

Akliṣṭa Unhindered *vṛtti*s (mental actions).

Ālaya The subterraine stream of consciousness; self-existent consciousness conceived by the Vijñānavādins in Buddhism.

Ānanda Bliss.

Ānandamaya-kośa The "sheath of bliss".

Aṅga Limb or integral component of a system, such as in *aṣṭāṅga* (eight limbs) in Patañjali Yoga.

Annamaya-kośa "The sheath of food (*anna*)"; the physical or gross body, nurtured by food; related to esoteric anatomy and physiology.

Antaḥkaraṇa Literally means internal instrument, corresponding to what may be called the mind.

Aparā Not transcendent; lower or limited; its opposite *parā* means supreme or superior. Placing an "a" before *parā*, makes it not superior or lower than. *Parā* can also mean far away (transcendent) so that *aparā* may mean empirical and immanent.

Appanā The steady concentration leading to a state of absorption (Buddhist psychology).

Arhant A high rank of self-realization lower than that of the Buddha.

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Arūpaloka Formless world in Buddhism.

Āsana Yogic physical posture, especially as recommended in Haṭha Yoga as one of the aids to concentration.

Asmitā Ego consciousness; I-ness; the sense of "I am"; "I exist".

Ātman The individual spirit or self; principle of life and sensation; subjective moment of consciousness; with capital Ā (*Ātman*), the universal spirit or the Supreme Soul of the universe.

Avidyā Generally ignorance, or nescience; ignorance of one's true nature, mistaking of appearance for reality.

Bhakti Faith, love, or devotion; as a religious principle, a means of salvation together with karma (action) and *jñāna* (spiritual knowledge).

Bhāva Emotion; subjective state of being (existence).

Bhavaṅga The foundational base of psychological being in Theravāda Buddhism. It is the ground condition that provides for continuity and identity of the changing states of the mind.

Bhoktā One who enjoys and/or suffers; the experiencer of the fruits of one's actions; subject; one who feels pleasure and pain.

Brahmacarya Restraint or abstention from lustful sensuality; celibacy; continence; self-restraint on all levels; discipline.

Brahman The Absolute, single and cosmic principle of reality as conceived in the Upaniṣads and in Vedānta; the Supreme Reality that is one and indivisible, ubiquitous, formless, infinite, eternal, and essentially indescribable principle which is said to pervade the universe. It is often described as having three main aspects, namely being, consciousness, and bliss (*sat-cit-ānanda*); the universal Self.

Buddhi According to Sāṁkhya-Yoga, as well as Advaita, one of the three aspects of the inner instrument, or *antaḥkaraṇa*. It is considered to be the chief instrument in one's cognitive activity.

Cetasikas Mental elements divided into four groups in Buddhism.

Citta The mind or an aspect of it comprising of not only the cognitive processes and the ego but also instinctual tendencies inherited from previous lives and the effects of past actions in this life (*vāsanās* and *saṁskāra*s).

Dhāraṇā Concentration of mind; a yogic term meaning anchoring the stream of thoughts to a particular object of thought; one of the eight stages of Rāja Yoga; in Patañjali yoga, a step in the course of restraining the processes of consciousness.

Dharma Duty; the righteous way of living, as enjoined by the sacred scriptures and spiritually illumined sages; characteristics; duties appropriate for one's station in life; doing one's duties is considered one of the four major goals of life, along with *artha, kāma,* and *mokṣa.*

Dhyāna (jhāna) Meditation, contemplation, specifically defined in yogic terminology as a steady and homogeneous flow of thoughts; the seventh rung in the eight-step ladder of yoga.

Ekāgra/Ekāgratā One-pointed focus and concentration.

Grāhya An object of cognition or of knowledge.

Guṇa Attribute; property, quality, or characteristic arising from nature (*prakṛti*) itself; as a rule, when "*guṇa*" is used, it is in reference to the three fundamental qualities, "strands" or interacting components of *prakṛti,* the primordial materiality of the universe.

Jāgṛti Waking state.

Jīva Person; embodied consciousness; individual spirit; embodied spirit; living organism; a conjoint psycho-somatic, psychophysical, conscious entity.

Jīvan-mukti State of embodied liberation.

Jñāna Cognition; wisdom; knowledge of reality or the *Brahman,* the absolute; enlightenment; supreme knowledge; self-realization; cognition.

Jñātā Knower; the person or self with the capacity to know or understand.

Kaivalya Literally, isolation. In Sāṁkhya and Yoga systems, the term *kaivalya* implies the state of release from the unending chain of actions and its consequences through the isolation or detachment of the *self* (*puruṣa*) from *prakṛti*; perfection, transcendental state of unconditioned freedom; a state of pure consciousness, free and unencumbered by the manifestations of *prakṛti*, which normally cloud consciousness as it is reflected on the *buddhi.*

Kāmaloka The empirical world in Buddhism.

Karma Literally, action; work; deeds; the result of action. Derived from the Sanskrit root *kṛ*, which means to act, do, or make, means any kind of action, including thought and feeling. Karma is both action and reaction, the metaphysical equivalent of the principle: "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." There are three kinds of karma: (1) *sañcita karma,* which is all the accumulated actions of all previous births, (2) *prārabdha karma,* the particular portion of such karma allowed for being worked out in the present life, (3) *āgāmi anārabdha karma,* actions of the future, or those that are not yet begun.

Karmāśaya The receptacle of karma that harbors *saṁskāra*s that cause subsequent actions and produce behavioral modifications.

Kartā Self as agent; one who acts; doer.

Kleśa Defilement; affliction one encounters; pain or suffering arising from disease; various obstacles or hindrances that disturb the equilibrium of the mind.

Kliṣṭa Hindered; afflicted by pain.

Kośa Sheath; bag; a sheath enclosing the soul; body. The AdvaitaVedānta conceives *jīva* (person) as a multi-layered entity composed of five nested sheaths, with the body on the outside (*annamaya*), followed by bodily functions (*prāṇamaya*), sensory capacities (*mano-maya*), cognitive functions (*vijñānamaya*), and finally blissfulness at the core (*ānandamaya*).

Lokuttara Transcendental plane of existence (Buddhism).

Mahat The Great Principle; the essential principle of being; the first to be evolved from *prakṛti*; intellect, the principle of cosmic intelligence, or *buddhi.*

Manas The mind. In AdvaitaVedānta, the basic features of *manas* are capabilities for cognitive differentiation and integration and for doubting and deciding. Also used for the aggregate of *citta, buddhi, manas,* and *ahaṁkāra*; the sensory mind; the perceiving faculty that receives the messages of the senses; inner sense.

Manomaya kośa "The sheath of the mind"; the level (*kośa*) of the sensory mind.

Māyā Advaitic conception of the veiling power, cosmic illusion; the person with her own identity, essentially the empirical mask masquerading for the true Self on the stage set in *saṁsāra* and the act played by *māyā.*

Mokṣa Release; freedom from transmigration from the perpetual chain of actions and their consequences and the consequent cycle of birth, death, and rebirth; liberation; to free oneself from, to liberate, to emancipate from transmigration.

Mukti Release; freedom from transmigration from the perpetual chain of actions and their consequences and the consequent cycle of birth, death, and rebirth; liberation; to free oneself from, to emancipate from transmigration.

Nididhyāsana Uninterrupted and persistent contemplation; profound and continuous meditation that leads to transcendental realization of truth. It is the last of the three stages of realization in Vedanta. The state of being so completely absorbed in contemplation of *Brahman* that no other thought enters the mind.

Niḥśreyasa The highest benediction; for the greatest welfare; final perfection of life; to achieve the ultimate goal of life; of the highest bliss; of what is very auspicious for personal transformation.

Nirodha A state of restraint in which the normal processes of the mind come to a standstill and the mind becomes empty of any content derived from the sensory inputs.

Nirvāṇa Liberation; final emancipation; the term is particularly applied to the liberation from the bondage of karma and the wheel of birth and death; absolute

experience; the final state into which beings enter during the course of enlightenment and are no longer bound and driven by the consciousness of an illusory ego; release/freedom from the physical world (*saṁsāra*). The term usually refers to the state of perfect calm, repose, or bliss resulting from the absolute extinction of all desires. It is often used synonymously with other terms such as *kaivalya*, *mokṣa,* and *mukti*. It is the supreme state of being in Buddhism.

Niyama Observances; laws, rules governing something or other, but in the context of psychology these are rules governing conduct or behaviour. In Yoga, *niyamas* refer to a set of observances.

Parā Transcendent, distinguished from *aparā* or empirical.

Prajñā Wisdom, discrimination, enlightening knowledge, insight, intellectual faculty; consciousness; awareness; highest wisdom, transcendent wisdom; also employed as a synonym for the universal 'substance.'

Prakṛti The foundational source of all material manifestations, including the mind. The term is also used to suggest persistent characteristics of individuals commonly designated in modern psychology as personality.

Pramāṇa Instrument or means of acquiring valid knowledge; an epistemic criterion for validating a cognition; valid cognition.

Prāṇamaya kośa "The sheath of vital air (*prāṇa*)." The sheath consisting of vital forces and the (psychic) nervous system.

Prāṇāyāma Control of the subtle life forces (breath/*prāṇa*), often by means of special modes of breathing. Therefore, breath control or breathing exercises are usually taken to mean *prāṇāyāma.*

Pratyāhāra Fifth rung in the Rāja Yoga ladder; abstraction, control, or withdrawal of the senses from their objects.

Pratyakṣa Direct perception; sense-perception, seen with one's own eyes or direct observation (one of the Sāṁkhya methods of proof). In Yoga, "*pratyakṣa*" refers to mental activities leading to valid cognition on the basis of direct perception.

Pravṛtti Literally means "to turn forth," innate tendency to act, positive volition, to win something, attachment of the sense organs to sense objects; pursuing what is desirable; action; endeavor.

Puruṣa Literal meaning is man; undifferentiated consciousness in the dualistic ontology of Sāṁkhya yoga; pure consciousness; consciousness as-such.

Rāga Attraction, attachment/affinity for something, implying a desire for it, which can be emotional (instinctual) or intellectual. It may range from simple liking or preference to intense desire and attraction.

Rajas One of the three components or "strands" or *guṇas* of *prakṛti* as conceived in Sāṁkhya philosophy; the active principle, roughly equivalent to energy; one

of the three primal qualities—described as red; restlessness; passion, desire for an object or goal.

Rasa Literally, essence, juice, relish. In traditional Indian aesthetics, *rasa* means "aesthetic relish", or the delectable quality inherent in a work of art.

Ṛtam True; truth; intrinsic orderliness of the universe; factual; positive state; eternal life; in reality.

Rūpa Body; material form.

Rūpaloka World of sublime forms in Buddhism.

Śabda Sound, word; testimony of scriptures; verbal testimony, the word based on the experience and intuition of the sages.

Sādhanā The instrument of knowing; method of spiritual practice; path; training and practice.

Sākṣin Self as witness. In Vedānta, it refers to the *self* (*ātman*) as an uninvolved witness, as opposed to a self which is egoistically attached to objects in the world; seer.

Samādhi A set of altered states of consciousness, where the aspirant is one with his object of meditation; profound absorption; a state of being where every activity of the mind ceases completely; advanced state of meditation; absorption in the self; oneness; the state of super consciousness; the meditator and the meditated, thinker and thought become one in experience.

Saṁsāra Empirical existence; the perpetual cycle of action and its consequences, including the putative cycle of birth, death, and rebirth; in *saṁsāra,* suffering is believed to exceed happiness; phenomenal world; the realm of relativity, transience and illusion; process of worldly life.

Saṁskāra The impressions left behind by experiences and actions that are said to shape future experiences and behaviour; cognitive schemas; innate tendencies; impressions in the mind from previous births.

Saṁyama Constraint; self-control; an all complete condition of balance and repose; one-pointedness of mind. In Yoga, perfect meditation that includes the triple effort of *dhāraṇā, dhyāna* and *samādhi.*

Sat Existence, reality, being, truth; an aspect of *Brahman*, the absolute or pure being.

Sattva One of the three components, "strands," or *guṇa*s of *prakṛti* as conceived in Sāṁkhya philosophy. *Sattva* is said to be characterized by illumination, subtlety and lightness as opposed to darkness and heaviness of *tamas*. Purest property of mind.

Satya Truthfulness; the ultimate truth; real.

Siddhi Attainment; spiritual perfection; psychic power; supernatural ability.

Skandhas In Buddhist psychology, the mind is seen as an aggregate of the five *skandha*s. The *skandhas* are (1) *rūpa* (form), (2) *vedanā* (feeling), (3) *saññā* (perception), (4) *saṅkhāra* (volition), and (5) *viññāna* (consciousness). *Rūpa* appears to include not only gross matter, but also the senses. *Vedanā* is of three kinds—pleasurable, painful, and indifferent. *Saññā* includes sensory as well as conceptual forms. *Sankhāra* means the group of volitions and other associated factors. *Viññāna* refers to the stage at which the cognitive process starts as well as the resulting awareness.

Smṛti Memory; recollection; "that which is remembered," refers to scriptures except the Vedas and Upaniṣads.

Śravaṇa Literally, listening; hearing of the Truth from the Guru. In Advaita Vedānta *śravaṇa* implies listening to, or the study of, the fundamental principles of Vedānta for the purpose of self-realization.

Sthitaprajña State of transcendence achieved by controlling sensory inputs by suitable mind control practices. Establishment in divine consciousness; one established in wisdom, whose intellect is stable (*Bhagavad Gītā*).

Sukha Happiness; joy; pleasant; agreeable.

Suṣupti State of deep sleep.

Swapna Dream state; dream is one of the four states of consciousness recognized by Vedānta. The other three states are *jāgṛti* (wakeful), *suṣupti* (sleep), and *turīyā* or the "Fourth" state.

Tamas One of the three components or "strands" of *prakṛti* as conceived in Sāṁkhya philosophy, characterized by heaviness, inertia, and darkness; ignorance.

Tanmātras Subtle, undifferentiated root elements of matter. There are five *tanmātrās: gandha* (smell), *rasa* (taste), *rūpa* (form), *sparśa* (touch), and *śabda* (sound). From the *tanmātrās* evolve the five gross elements and their compounds.

Tapas Austerity.

Triguṇa (See also *guṇa*): The triad of qualities, especially *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas,* conceived as three strands of *prakṛti* in Sāṁkhya philosophy.

Turīyā The state of pure consciousness. In the Upaniṣads and the system of Vedānta, *turīyā* implies the "Fourth state" of consciousness, ever present and unchanging consciousness, which is said to be devoid of intentionality or subject–object split; a state where one has direct experience of *Ātman/Brahman.*

Upacāra Unsteady concentration.

Vairāgya Dispassion; detachment, absence of desire, nonego involvement or indifference towards and distaste for all worldly things and enjoyments.

Vāsanā Instinctual tendencies inherited from previous lives.

Vidyā Education; knowledge; learning; the knowledge derived from Vedic scripture; often refers to *parā vidyā* (transcendental knowledge) distinguished from *aparā vidyā* (empirical knowledge).

Vijñāna Realized knowledge; perfect knowledge; practical knowledge; and practical application of that knowledge in life.

Vikalpa State of being aware of imaginary and unreal entities.

Vikṣepa Projection.

Vikṣipta Occasionally steady; distracted.

Viparyaya Processes of consciousness involved in incorrect cognition or in the experience of illusions, such as the experience of seeing two moons.

Vīrya Lasting energy or power.

Viśeṣa Individuality; particular; special; distinctive qualification.

Vitarka/Vitakka Reason, reflection.

Viveka Sense of discrimination; wisdom; discrimination between the real and the unreal, between the self and the non-self, between the permanent and the impermanent; discriminative inquiry; right intuitive discrimination; ever present discrimination between the transient and the permanent.

Vṛtti Fluctuating state of the mind that is cognitively, affectively and volitionally loaded. The thrust of Patañjali's Yoga is to systematically control the fluctuations of the mind.

Vyāvahārika Empirical; worldly activity; involving interaction between the individual and the surrounding world.

Yama Restraints such as abstaining from causing injury and uttering falsehood, recommended as the first of eight steps to Yoga. *Yama* is also the name of the Hindu deity who is said to preside over death.

Yoga Literally, "joining" or "union" from the Sanskrit root "*yuj*", yoke or discipline; a term that refers to numerous systems of spiritual development, the more commonly known one expounded by the sage Patañjali; a system of Indian philosophy.

Yogi-pratyakṣa Paranormal awareness.

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